

A STUDY ON THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN HINDI TV SERIES 'NIMKI MUKHIYA' AIRED ON STAR BHARAT

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ABSTRACT

This paper is on the portrayal of women characters in Indian TV serials. The research is conducted on the portrayal of women characters in Hindi TV serial 'Nimki Mukhiya' aired on Star Bharat at 8:30 PM from Monday to Friday. The nation which claims to be in the process of "globalisation" or "modernisation" still portrays its women in meaningless masses of costume jewellery and sarees. When women of India are progressing to be IPS and IAS Officers, all these contemporary "slice-of-life" soaps are still entangled in household plots and schemes. To reach objectives both qualitative and quantitative study has been conducted. For qualitative study, content analysis of all the episodes of the serial telecasted in the month of September, 2019 has been done. For quantitative study, a survey consisting of a questionnaire of twenty close-ended questions has been formed. The samplings are purposive and snowball.

Keywords: Representation, reality, stereotype, marginalized, sexuality, programmes, responsibility, society.

INTRODUCTION

Television and its content have a strong impact on people's minds. People learn and get inspired by the type of content they are exposed to. A lot of social reform contents are shown which provokes people to break the stereotype and stand out of the queue. It brings changes in the society and helps the people to stand for each other. Lately, there have been a lot of changes in the portrayal of women characters which helped the in the development of the women. But there are limitations as well. Women characters are portrayed in number of different ways in Indian TV serials. According to few serials, a perfect woman is one who knows how to manage her household chores along with her kids and also whose husband's opinion is her opinion. She is always confined to the four walls of the house. She should be soft, delicate, non-aggressive, submissive etc. This type of content often encourages patriarchy. There is also depiction of relationship between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and how there can never be a positive and healthy relationship between them. Majority of times, women are depicted as a sex object. They are shown in appealing clothes and are degraded by the society.

Moreover, in the serial, if a woman is outspoken and confident and wears western clothes, she is portrayed as villain and often called as Vamp as compared to the women who is simple, introvert and wears a sari or salwar-kameez. There is also the concept of fair and dark skin. Women with fair skin are considered more attractive as compared to women with dark skin. Some serials have antagonist as a woman with darker skin and protagonist as a woman with fairer skin. This portrayal of women and their discrimination on the basis of skin colour throws light on the plight of women in Indian society. The type of content aired on television shapes the mind of the audience.

Objectives:

1. To study the portrayal of women characters in the serial 'Nimki Mukhiya' which Star Bharat claims to have launched in order to showcase women empowerment.
2. To study whether female characters are portrayed as capable of decision making or not.

Limitations:

Due to time constraints, episodes telecasted in the month of September has been analysed as the part of content analysis. The questionnaire has been formulated in Google form for the survey. The content analysis is conducted on the basis of following categories:

- Decision-making power.
- Working vs. housewife.
- Equal opportunities as men.
- Victims of domestic violence.
- Dressing.
- Nature of the portrayal of women (traditional/sex object).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To reach the objectives content analysis of the Indian Hindi TV series 'Nimki Mukhiya' aired on Star Bharat is done. The series consists of six seasons and still running. Here, all the episodes telecasted in September, 2019 analyzed to find out whether the serial portrays women empowerment or not and whether women in the serial are capable of decision making or not. The parameters of content analysis are as follows:

1. Decision-making power.
2. Working vs. housewife.
3. Equal opportunities as men.
4. Victims of domestic violence.
5. Dressing.
6. Nature of the portrayal of women (traditional/sex object).

A survey is conducted to know the public perception about the serial and Indian TV Series as a whole. A questionnaire consisting of twenty close-ended questions is formed on Google and shared among the people who watch this serial in Bihar between the age group of 15-50 years. The sampling methods are purposive and snowball. The questions are as follows:

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Findings:

In the latest TRP ratings, the serial 'Nimki Mukhiya' has managed to take 16th position in TRP chart and it has got 2.1 TRP ratings. Nimki Mukhiya is the longest-running show of Star Bharat. On 12 August, 2019, the serial changed its name from 'Nimki Mukhia' to 'Nimki Vidhayak' as she becomes MLA of Patna in the serial.

According to the survey conducted, revealed that:

- 96% people think that the serial portrays women empowerment.
- 74% people agree that the serial depicts the situation of women in rural Bihar.
- 80% people agree with the fact that in the serial women are capable of decision making.
- 64% people believe that women in the serial depend on men for most of the important work.
- 66% people disagree that the serial depicts a healthy relationship between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law.
- 86% people believe that the serial portrays stereotypical opinions about women.
- 14% people believe that there is no depiction of domestic violence against women in the serial.
- 64% people think that the serial depicts supportive family members who allow women to go out and work.
- 54% people believe that people in the serial judge women on the basis of their dressing.
- 46% people believe that the portrayal of women in the serial is a myth.
- 30% people believe that the serial is not appropriate for children to watch.
- 78% people believe that the serial is helping men to change their perceptions about women in reality.
- 8% people think that the protagonist of the serial is not justifying her role.
- 90% people believe that our society is affected by the way women are portrayed in Indian TV series.
- 10% people believe that Indian TV series do not influence the dressing sense of its audience, especially women.
- 50% people watch TV series on repeat.
- 52% people believe that there are changes in their lifestyle after watching Indian TV series.
- 48% people believe that women in Indian TV series are not portrayed as sex object.
- 66% people agree that Indian TV series help in education.
- 80% people believe that Indian TV series portray our culture.

According to the content analysis done regarding the serial,

- **Decision- making power:** According to the survey conducted, 80% people believe that the serial portrays women with decision- making power. This is also analyzed in the serial. The protagonist and other women in the serial are portrayed equally powerful and even more powerful than men for that matter. Women are portrayed competent enough to take important decisions for her life and work. Therefore, it is concluded that the serial portray women as capable of decision-making.
- **Working vs. housewife:** According to the serial, there is not so much depiction of working women superior and capable as compared to housewives. The working women give equal importance to both her family and her work. Similarly, housewives manage the household chores and her family together. There is no depiction of clash between working women and housewives. According to the survey conducted, 64% people believe that women in the serial depend on men for most of the important work. Moreover, 64% people believe that the serial depicts stereotypical opinions about women.
- **Equal opportunities as men:** According to the serial, the protagonist becomes the village chief and MLA later. This proves that women in the serial as provided with equal opportunities as men. Moreover, women are portrayed as pro in sports like tennis. According to the survey, 64% people believe that the serial depicts supportive family members who allow women to go out and work. The protagonist becomes the village chief and later, MLA. Therefore, it can be concluded that the serial portray women with equal opportunities as men.
- **Victims of domestic violence:** According to the survey conducted, 86% people believe that women are portrayed as victim of domestic violence. In the serial also women are portrayed as physically weaker than men and often attacked by her family members or goons. Therefore, it can be concluded that the serial portrays women as victim of domestic violence.
- **Dressing:** According to the survey, 54% people believe that people in the serial judge women on the basis of dressing. The serial depicts women wearing saree or salwar. It also depicts ghunghat or parda system. As the plot setting is in rural area, the serial depict women wearing salwar or saree more as compared to western clothes.
- **Nature of the portrayal of women (traditional/sex object):** According to the serial, women are portrayed more in traditional way rather than sex object. It portrays women more powerful and independent who can fight any odd in their lives. No doubt they are portrayed as physically weaker than men who need protection from men from any physical attack. At the same time, it portrays women more competent than men. Women are also portrayed as believer of stereotypes like performing arti tradition to protect their family from evil souls.

Conclusion:

“There is nothing permanent in this world except change”.

-Heraclitus

Our society is changing each and every day. As compared to olden days, women have more and equal opportunities as men. Women are excelling in all the aspects of life. But still there are places in India which has superstitious opinions regarding women. They are still trapped in patriarchal societies. Women are still considered as incapacitated in most of the Indian society. 'Men dominating women', this idea has made our beliefs hollow. Though it would take decades to wash away this idea from grassroots, media plays a prominent role to improve the conditions of women in India. TV soap operas are a major part of the media. They should promote women empowerment for regaining confidence of women in common platforms.

It is also true that Indian society consider women as weak and submissive. Media is considered as one of the most effective tool to bring change in and around our country. Television is one of the most used medium. It plays a very crucial role in lives of the people. Indian TV serials are used as a great source of entertainment by all age- groups.

TV serials can bring a huge social and cultural change in our society. It can portray the real problems women face in our society like dowry, lack of educational opportunities, lack of employment, acid- attack victims, and so on. This would help to spread awareness among the common people. This would also encourage women to step out and empower themselves.

From the study it can be concluded that, many serials are coming up with social issues which is helping women with education and information. But at the same time, there are many serials which revolve around stereotypical opinions about women. These serials also depict women pulling down other women. Television serials can do much better by showing the reality. They can shape the mind of the audience in different ways by showing what kind of family life is desirable, how the relationship between a husband and wife could be, how parents can connect with their children and so on. Keeping people in the fantasy world would not work always. It is high time to deal with reality and show the reality.

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