



Gilmore Girls and Varane Avashyamundu: A Perspective Analysis on Parenting Styles of Lorelai and Neena

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Abstract: Parenting styles have been widely discussed since many centuries ago and is also a discourse now. This research paper examines the insights of two mothers from different continents and different decades. Namely, Lorelai and Neena from the TV show and movie, Gilmore Girls and Varane Avashyamundu respectively from Stars Hollow, a fictional town in the West and Chennai, Southern part of India. Both of the aforesaid content deals with single mothership where a destitute mother builds a new life with her daughter at a new place. The depiction of mother-daughter combos has been explored myriad times, but at this juncture of the 2020s when the aforementioned movie was released, it led its connection with the content of the aforesaid TV Show which was binge-watched during the aforesaid time which was the pandemic time. Both of the contents fall under the genre Drama which enhanced the importance of the genre giving it more reach to a wide span of audience. A specific point which this paper discusses is the style of life both of the mother-daughter combos deal with. The style renders a long course of discussions and awareness to fine-tune the relationship between mothers and daughters. This paper explores how honest communication between mother and daughter leads to a more inclusive and comprehensive life. Both of them at crucial junctures of life discuss to the audience the prominence of honest communication. The aim is to provide meaningful insights that can guide the way of thought people have about drama content and mother-daughter relationship.

Index Terms - TV Show, Movie, Mother-Daughter Combo, Parenting, Drama, Genre, Visual Media, Independence, Generation Gap, Self Love, Situationship.

I. INTRODUCTION

Entertainment industry always paved the way for the mass audience to get to think about various issues affecting and which are relatable to them. Among the entertainment industry is the TV channels and movie theatres. Now OTT has evolved as the most reachable platform to get updated, educated, guided and entertained. Myriad contents spanning over various OTT platforms led the world to appreciate talents from anywhere across the world. In 2020, Varane Avashyamundu started streaming in Netflix during the Covid-19 pandemic and Gilmore Girls started streaming on the same platform in October 1, 2014 ([‘Gilmore Girls’ added to Netflix in October | CNN](#)). The pandemic era popularised OTT platforms more amongst the regional audiences. It was during 2023, Gilmore girls was watched. Spanning across seven seasons each consisting of 22 episodes, Gilmore Girls threw light on strong and meaningful mother-daughter relationships which were built upon deep and honest communication. Varane Avashyamundu which also dealt with the same discussed the issue in 2019. The original pilot episode of Gilmore Girls was streamed in 2000. The essence of drama content was also popularised during the 2020s along with the popularisation of OTT platforms. The specific topic which this paper discusses is the mother-daughter duo enduring the normalcy and hardships of life.

In this era where content of originality is gaining more momentum, drama genres in visual media, specifically the broadcast and OTT, evinces the daily life moments common people have to deal with. The aforesaid content provides beautiful insights helping the people to make a decision and achieve a consensus in many aspects of life. The people here are generalised as mothers and daughters. They can help other people as well through the essence of drama. Endless conflicts are perennial in a mother-daughter duo, so are happy moments, but the epitome of both of the circumstances are uncontrollable and many mothers and daughters are facing the brunt of a dysfunctional family and equilibrium. Both of the aforesaid shows reflect the mother-daughter duos devoid of external obstructions, and they are confined to a boundary set by themselves revealing the power of independence in multifaceted dimensions. Both Lorelai and Neena, the mothers from Gilmore Girls and Varane Avashyamundu respectively, are independent mothers moving to a new setting of their lives with their daughters. What happens in their new town forms the rest of their lives deepening the meaning of their relationships. The paper analyses pertinent moments from both of the contents to present a glimpse and excerpts of mother-daughter relationship and communication. The analysis also compares how generational gaps convey contradictory moments. These contents tell us that Generation gap at times is merely a concept and everything is ultimately based upon basic human instincts.

1.2 THE INFANCY OF THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER COMBO

The rift between Emily Gilmore and Lorelai Gilmore led the latter to leave her parental home and reach Stars Hollow, a small town, that too with her one-year-old daughter Rory Gilmore when she was only Seventeen. The aforesaid gesture itself proves that Lorelai had the audacity to execute her mettle to win her own life on her own unique terms. Her spouse and her first boyfriend Christopher leave her behind. This shapes Lorelai as a more independent woman who raises her child in a well-brought up manner. Financial independence was inevitable for Lorelai and it is evident from the first season itself where Lorelai garners a loan from her mother to teach her daughter in Chilton School where she prospectively eyed. She assures her mother that the amount will be repaid. She also leads an Inn called 'Independence' where she toils to earn a living and lifestyle for them, Lorelai and Rory.

Neena from Varane Avashyamundu moves to an apartment in Chennai after Jayaram, her favorite choice amongst those she had admiration upon, treated her in the most toxic manner right after they registered for their marriage. Neena holds a special place in her heart for romance, both to find herself and to end in a good relationship with someone she admires. Neena finds a job herself as a French teacher in a Teaching academy nearby and she has prospective plans for the future as well. This also reflects light upon how important preserving one's peace, boundary and life is, especially for a beloved daughter. Neena's gesture also throws light upon the significance of Independence. Nikitha aka Nikki is a little older than Rory Gilmore, and she has a job as well. Following the footsteps of Neena, the audience can assume that Nikki also will shape a future on her own terms.

Rory, during the pace of advancement of a substantial number of seasons in Gilmore Girls is a bookish student who does not want to get behind in her study schedule. She also immerses herself in a world of books. Although she is more into academics, she finds time in her busy academic schedule to read fiction as well.

1.3 MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS, CHARACTER DIMENSIONS

Lorelai Gilmore is cool, loves her home being cluttered, manages things efficiently and creatively. There is a conception that those who love cluttered lifestyles can have more creative powers, right or wrong, it appears fit for Lorelai Gilmore. Provided the fire happened in Independence Inn and how she dealt with that although she was helpless dealing with Michelle, Sookie and all reflects her power of crisis management. Lorelai loves sleep much

Neena on the other hand, is very positive, and deals with her life in a very organized and happier kind of way. She accepts life as it comes, is content with what she has, and loves herself more revealing the good pattern of self-love to the audience. She values instincts and connection more than materialism. She says in an instance to her daughter "do not select your life partner confirming marriage as a material, you should not have judged me if you experienced romance at least once in your life". This also shows how advanced and open minded she is. She asks her daughter not to be so cheap when her daughter teases her while she forms an attachment with Major Unnikrishnan, a new tenant who moved into the nearby flat in her same apartment

Rory Gilmore is matured in her studies and job while an amateur in all walks of life. Her friend Lane is more focused on her band and other interests though she is confined under her mother's conditions. Rory is a pure human being and a student who has all the limits of being a teenager and an early adult. She is susceptible to infatuation, dating and ego clash. She is obsessed with Dean when he moves on with another girl. In an instance, Lorelai finds Rory with Dean in her bed with no repentance of him being with another girl. Lorelai points out to her the just above-mentioned statement. Lorelai was okay with her mentioned deed if Dean was with her. This shows the dimension of discipline one has to keep in one's love or romantic life. Rory Develops an intense crush on Jess and when he openly flirts with another girl, Rory also kisses Dean in front of him in public. This proves Rory as a raw, original and normal human being as anyone

When panning the focus to Nikitha aka Nikki, is a flaw full youngster who has ego in the label of self-respect, loves her mother much, and is also a normal human being, as the movie portrays her at various junctures. At the infancy, she is not comfortable with her mother starting a relationship with Major Unnikrishnan. This may be attributed to a daughter's possessiveness towards a single mother. She compares Neena to the mother of Aby whom she confides in after a crush as he took his Master's Degree in Chocolate which attracted her the most. Deep down Nikki loves Neena the most. When Aby was about to leave Nikki after knowing her mother's past from her, Nikki tells him that her mother is a strong character who did not make her remember the absence of a father in her life. So similar to Rory, Nikitha is also a normal, original, human being.

1.4 MEN IN THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER COMBOS WHO HAD A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON THEIR PARENTING AND RELATIONSHIP

Major Unnikrishnan is said in the movie to be the sixth love of Neena and what she finds adorable is that he does not like her crying. Major stands firm as a polite, humble, very understanding and so respectable, a human being to Neena. When he wears a Jubba for the first time, he wanted Neena to identify and appreciate, but owing to a tiff between Nikki, Neena was down. Still Unnikrishnan understands and listens to her very well and communicates openly that she did not mind while he wore a Jubba for the first time.

Luke in Gilmore Girls, the one who owns the world-famous fictional Luke's coffee shop, confines to himself upholding his own principles, including 'no phone' while at his cafe, no irregular orders and also, he keeps such principles in his personal life as well. He develops a secret crush towards Lorelai which in the same equality she also possesses and eventually they become one

Bibeeh aka Fraud in Varane Avashyamund is a smart young chap who handles conflicts very intelligently, at the eleventh hour though. He is an archetype of a Kerala youngster who goes for a job for a living, has a love interest and has Akashvani and his younger brother as a family who is very fond of him. He breaks up with his first love owing to conflict of interests, eventually merges his fondness for love with Nikki.

Jess is an angry young man who loves adventures which are adorable for Rory. Dean is a typical stranger who eventually transforms as a support for Rory dissolving her solitude very beautifully and colorfully

Christopher is a toxic person to Lorelai that whenever he turns up, Lorelai ends up crying owing to his selfish needs and manipulation Richard, the maths teacher, Lorelai's instant crush on the screen as the pilot season progresses is concealed in front of Rory, the good point in parenting and standing for one's own interests. Richard-Lorelai combo is also an archetype of situationship, which we talk about these days as a topic of discussion. Rory has an ambiguous attitude towards her teacher's and mother's relationship.

When Unnikrishnan arrives alone in the apartment where Neena lives, she was curious from the first moment itself. Unnikrishnan was quite unapproachable, shutting the doors and all preserving his privacy. Gradually he develops a bond with her. Neena was actually introduced to Unnikrishnan by Dr. Bose whom Unnikrishnan seeks help for mental therapy to curb his anger and wrath over trifles. One day at his clinic, Unnikrishnan meets Neena for the first time and with Neena's initiation they return back to the apartment together in the same cab where Unni fumbles and startles to initiate a conversation with her. Later it is revealed that Unni who does not reveal a smile often smiles at Neena alone. He wants her to be happy all the time and she indeed is with him and in the prospective future with him. Neena plans her afterlife, that is after Nikki's marriage, she can also be comfortable if Major is with her. But the residents notice something unusual and interesting going on between Unnikrishnan and Neena. Subsequently Nikita asks her mother about this. She ultimately admits that she has something with Unnikrishnan. Nikitha vociferously reflects her resentment over this, making this mother-daughter combo go silent between themselves for a while. The audience perceive a very traditional Nikki, who is refusing enough to not let her mother pursue her love life. Nikki is obsessed with her having a relationship and having a close mother-daughter relationship. Along while, sincerely and generously Unnikrishnan is much more compassionate about Nikitha as Neena's daughter. He asks about Nikitha's welfare to Neena to which she communicates genuinely that Nikitha has developed a crush towards the aforementioned Fraud aka Bibeesh. P that in disguise of going to a dentist, she has gone to meet him. Unnikrishnan grins over this which marks a very understanding man in the marquee on behalf of the audience. (Remembering DCP Raghavan's (played by Kamal Hasan) in the Tamil movie 'Vettaiyaadu Vilaiyaadu' directed by Gautham Vasudev Menon, stating to Aradhana (played by Jyothika) that "Maya namma oree ponna iruppa"). This is subsequently followed after the former has fallen for the latter who is a divorcee and a single mom. Unnikrishnan is also equalized with DCP Raghavan by a character in Varane Avashyamund. Bibeesh with reference to the aforesaid lost love was in a state of despair when he confronts the equally broken Nikki by a boyfriend who was not ready to accept Neena's state of being in an affair with Major Unnikrishnan. Bibeesh and Nikitha eventually confide in each other.

Talking about the men in Neena-Nikki combo does not get complete without reflecting Neena's narrative of her men in life to Manuel Chachan that the Major becomes the Sixth person in her life after a toxic and traumatic relationship with Jayaram to whom she got married and she also mentions that he was her favorite choice than her school and college crushes. She eventually confided in Major Unnikrishnan because he didn't like her crying, the statement to which Manuel satiating bursts out into laughter endorsing his approval. Here, Manuel Chachan also acts as an understanding relative to Neena.

When panning the focus onto Richard Gilmore, Lorelai's Dad and Rory's Granddad, the scene becomes an archetype of a protective dad, ideal husband to Emily, and a very caring and guiding granddad to Rory. He is preoccupied with job, priorities and his hobbies. He plays his role very well in all dimensions of his life. Richard at the same time is also, a sheer human being who is susceptible to raw human emotions, most of which he conveys to Emily does not get easily satiated by his grim wits. Along while, their relationship is intact with the active and brutally honest involvement of Emily and Richard.

Emily needs to be specially mentioned that her parenting style reflects through Lorelai. Though she imparted the power of independence to Lorelai, we slightly feel an immaturity in Emily as a parent, that she attends to the minutest details to Lorelai even when she is an independent citizen, citing, at a function she says to Lorelai that her dress needs pressing. More than Rory, Emily adores Lorelai much.

1.5 THE CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING A MOTHER-DAUGHTER BALANCE

Lorelai goes silent on Rory in *Gilmore Girls* because she is deeply hurt and disappointed when Rory decides to drop out of Yale and move in with her grandparents without consulting her. Lorelai believes Rory is making a serious mistake and feels betrayed, especially by Emily and Richard's support of Rory's decision. Unable to accept or support this path, Lorelai chooses to distance herself, leading to one of the most significant rifts in their usually close relationship. When Neena's relationship with Major Unnikrishnan attains a higher magnitude, Nikki, literally being a millennial, assumes the air of a traditional girl, marking that the millennials have a mixture of traditional-cum-modern attitude. Neena struggles in vain to achieve a talking term with her daughter as she is tight-lipped because of her mother's new relationship.

1.6 BALANCING SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS AND AUDIENCE DEMANDS IN MOTHER-DAUGHTER DUO

Lorelai is supposed to be the independent woman catering to the initial and educational needs of her daughter, on her own, along while helicoptering the love interests of Rory. Lorelai was not offended with Rory's confrontations other than being with Dean in his bed, after he got married, as when the said info was revealed out of Rory's mouth, Lorelai stated her decision with her perspective that, Dean is not the old Dean with respect to the view of his marriage. Rory was not mature enough to control her boundaries though consent was there from both the sides. In the West also, there is a perception or a submissiveness as when a relationship devoid of the knowledge of a committed partner occurs, there arises a question of fear or morality. On the other side of the world, Akashvani, Mami and all neighbours of Neena who are the CCTVs of that apartment complex, being not toxic, they are curious regarding unusual relationships, say specifically, that of Neena and Major Unnikrishnan. To address this, neighbours 'urges are optimally satiated with themselves adhering to the basic norms and beauties of understanding, the point where Nikki, Rory and Fraud suffers in terms of balancing their emotions in terms of expression.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a **qualitative approach** to study how parenting is shown through Lorelai in *Gilmore Girls* and Neena in *Varane Avashyamundu*. The focus is on how both mothers speak, act, and respond to situations with their children. By closely looking at these moments, the study identifies the different ways in which each character takes on her role as a parent.

The method followed is **content analysis**. Important scenes and conversations are selected and examined to find patterns connected to care, discipline, emotional support, and decision-making. To guide the study, **Baumrind's theory of parenting styles**—authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive—is used as a reference.

Since Lorelai belongs to a Western background and Neena comes from an Indian (Malayalee) setting, the study also considers the **cultural context**. This helps to understand how their social environments shape their parenting choices.

In short, the methodology is **descriptive and comparative**. It does not use surveys or numbers but instead depends on interpretation of the two texts to explain and compare how motherhood and parenting styles are represented.

2.1 Data and Sources of Data

The foundation of this study rests on **secondary sources**, drawn primarily from two visual narratives: the American series *Gilmore Girls* and the Malayalam film *Varane Avashyamundu*. These texts are not treated merely as entertainment, but as cultural documents that reflect parenting choices within two very different contexts. Lorelai's presence as a single mother in the Western frame and Neena's role as a widowed mother in the Indian setting together form the central ground of analysis.

The **data is gathered through careful observation** of episodes and scenes where the mothers' roles are most visible—moments of dialogue, conflict, affection, or decision-making that reveal their parenting style. *Gilmore Girls* provides recurring situations that highlight Lorelai's evolving relationship with Rory, while *Varane Avashyamundu* offers a more compact, filmic portrayal of Neena's bond with her daughter.

Alongside these primary texts, the research also engages with **scholarly works on parenting theories**, particularly Baumrind's classification of parenting styles. These theoretical references are not used mechanically, but as guiding lenses to interpret the patterns found in both narratives.

In this way, the data for the study emerges from a **blend of textual analysis and theoretical grounding**, allowing the comparison of Lorelai and Neena's parenting to be both descriptive and culturally rooted.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The limbo of a single mother getting caught up with her daughter in society to upbringing her has been well known since many era ago, but panning the focus on to the 2000s and 2020s, the parenting styles have been a topic of discourse, but the point is that gentleness is equalized with originally confronting the inability to handle many things. But the essence of communication paves the way for cementing the bond between many mother-daughter duos. Confronting the topics which were once considered as taboo, leads to a harmonious and meaningful mother-daughter duo. Neena acts as a pillar for many mothers to raise a daughter with turbulent features, by being gentle, conserving one's own boundaries, by being yourself, not sacrificing everything for Nikki as she is her daughter and considering her as an individual even if they are blood relations. Lorelai has the blend of aspiring to be her better self of a single mother parent and all the immaturities pertaining to her age. It is said that Rory was born when Lorelai was 16. Let there be many parents and parenting styles, but let Lorelai and Neena be at least a feeble light in guiding them.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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