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## INDIAN WOMEN AND THEIR DEPICTION IN INDIAN TELEVISION SERIALS

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### ABSTRACT

Indian serials are way too popular among Indian female audiences. There are characters in Indian serials who are really very far from reality. The one who is good is very good, and the bad one is too bad. There is no normal or real life in Indian serials. Indian serials set the criteria for an Indian woman in an imaginary world. Serials have changed the image of Indian women. Every single character is a representation of either goodness or evil. Two extreme sides are often seen in the daily soaps. There are serials like Sasural Gendha Phool and Agle Janam Mohe Bitiya. Hi Kijo, Balika Vadhu, Anupama, Meet, etc. dramatically target the issues of our society. But on the other side, serials like Kumkum Bhagya, Kundali Bhagya, Yeh Rishta kya Kehlata Hai, Sauraal Simar Ka, Nagin, etc. are irrational and, for no reason, are liked by a huge audience. There are tracks in these serials that are really difficult to digest. Reason, logic, and rationality are far away from these serials. There is no contribution from such serials to society. Multiple marriages, deaths, rebirths, and plastic surgery—moreover, nobody ages in these serials; in fact, every twenty years, the characters become more beautiful and stylish. Women are identified as vamps or heroines only by their appearance. If the woman in serials dresses well or keeps herself in good shape, she is understood to be a bad woman, a negative character, or an enemy of the heroine, like Kavya, Komolika, Maya, Sherlin, Tanu, etc. Undoubtedly, there are shows that have messages for a primarily orthodox society, but that is not the case with all the serials. There were serials in the Indian television industry that were misogynistic. And Ekta Kapoor has changed the scenario to make it misandrist. The Indian television industry has produced a number of serials that have nothing to do with reality. Indian serials also promote superstitions in the audience.

**Keywords:** *Misogynistic, Misandrist, Promotion of superstitions*

### Introduction:

Entertainment is something that everybody needs there. The hectic daily routines of people make them so exhausted and frustrated that they want something to escape them from their worries, be it serials, movies, theatres, good music, etc. A huge number of Indian women are homemakers and don't have any time to entertain themselves from their daily schedule without any leave from housekeeping duties. Thus, understanding the psychology and needs of women, the Indian television industry took the initiative to provide something for entertainment. Indian culture is so patriarchal that all the sacrifices and all the responsibilities are expected from the women family members in most Indian families. Realising this fact, the Indian television industry targeted the Indian female audience. What happens in Indian TV serials is plotting, conspiracies, unusual family politics, etc.

There is an image set in the serials that an ideal woman is someone who is good at studying, cooking, sacrificing, being calm, composed, tolerant, etc. An ideal woman in TV serials never complains, never punishes, never fights or argues, and never asks for anything. Now the question is, "Who finds such character in real life? If a normal human being cannot have all these qualities, then why is normality lacking in daily soaps? Who portrays such women who don't fit in anywhere in reality? Well, the answer is probably the audience itself; people want to see or enjoy something extraordinary and exciting. Daily soaps are criticised a lot for their misleading representation of Indian culture and traditions. Indian serials have female characters who are more than perfect but still disliked by the whole family. Nobody trusts her, no matter how good or dedicated she is to the family. On the other hand, there are negative characters who are loved by all for no logical reason. This happens in serials only. Let's discuss some of the most popular yet realistic serials. The first such serial that catches my attention is Ekta Kapoor's "Kasauti Zindagi Kii," the famous serial of Shweta Tiwari. This serial was famous for the love story of Perna and Anurag, who both have unconditional love for each other, but this unconditional love never flourished. Poor Perna had to marry Mr. Bajaj, who was a multimillionaire and the father of three adult children. Now that Perna is so virtuous, how can she change an evil man? Yes, Perna made Mr. Bajaj also a virtuous man; he changed his personality, his basic nature, almost his complete personality. For every trouble in Perna's life, there is another woman who influences everyone in the family against Perna, even his love, Anurag, so basically, there is no trust for someone in the serials who is simply good. Family drama and family conspiracies like serials are never to be digested. The depiction of relationships among people in the family is complete nonsense. But to spice up the story, there is always Komolika, who is the winner with so much plotting and politics. So, in short, serial is illogical and irrational plot construction with multiple marriages, deaths and comebacks of the dead, plastic surgeries, and so on. Divorce remarriages are such a sensitive issue, but it is kind of a game in such serials. Such serials lack the morality of Indian culture and tradition. It is very easy for such serials to mock the institutions of marriage and family. What standard do they set for the younger generation for whom they are role models?

## FEMINISM OF INDIAN SERIALS

There has been a huge change in feminism as a movement since the 20th century. Serials attract a rich population and set trends among youngsters. There are some episodes in some of the most popular serials that have highly controversial content. Sometimes they are highly commendable, but sometimes they are condemnable. The portrayal of women in the daily soaps is mostly unreal or superfluous. Nobody has these types of women in their families. Women in such serials are always more than perfect. She is always ready to sacrifice, always available, always tries to please everybody, fulfils all the duties, and what not? But still, most of the members of the family hate her and plot against her. Everybody is always ready to summon her for just one allegation because nobody trusts her. One wrong allegation makes her the recidivist in the eyes of the family, and to prove her innocence, she struggles to collect the evidence. On the other hand, if a man is doubted in serials, his wife blindly trusts him. This is how serials portray women.

If you remember the popular show on Star Plus "Kahani Ghar Ghar Kii". The show was in controversy for one of the episodes where a blind girl was raped by a man who simply justified his crime as an act of teaching a lesson to the blind girl. The show was loved by a massive audience and ran for eight long years, as it was about family unity, culture, traditions, love, and sacrifice. But this particular scene of the show dragged the show from the skies to the dust.

The next show in the row is again Ekta Kapoor's "Kundali Bhagya." The show is full of melodrama and the never-ending painful journey of Preeta and Karan. They both fight but love each other a lot. Like I said before, every female lead is mistreated by the family, and that is the case with Preeta too. Preeta is a dream woman, but she can still be thrown out of the house at any moment. Preeta is a well-educated woman and a beautiful, ideal daughter-in-law, but Sherlin, who always traps Preeta in her wicked conspiracies, never gets caught. The story and the cast are different, but the style of portraying women is almost identical in the daily soaps. Most designers prefer delicate, fragile, and soft materials. At last, how can I forget to talk about the favourite serial of everyone, 'ANUPAMA," the number one show of Ranjhan Shahi telecast on Star Plus? We have seen Anupama struggle to please everyone in the family. Her priority is her children, her parents-in-law, and her husband. The whole life of Anupama revolves around them. She never misses a single responsibility, but everybody takes her for granted. This serial is undoubtedly more toxic than other serials. This serial has strong female characters that are somehow grounded in reality.

This particular show is different from other popular shows because of the realistic approach of the makers. No illogical scenes are there in the serials, like weird leaps, plastic surgeries, many marriages, etc. In fact, the show always has some episodes where sensitive issues like rape, children in orphanages, and genuine problems in marriage are presented masterfully.

So, to conclude this paper, I would say that, like literature, television also plays a big role in building society. Serials have a larger audience than cinema, so they influence a large number of people at a time. And because they are watched in many countries, these are representations of India and Indian culture, so there should be no absurdity in the serials.

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