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The Socio-cultural Portrayal of Women Characters in Hindi and Marathi TV Serials: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Television plays a pivotal role in shaping societal perceptions, particularly regarding gender roles. This research project, *The Socio-cultural Portrayal of Women Characters in Hindi and Marathi TV Serials: A Comparative Study*, examines how women are represented in popular Indian television serials. Focusing on Hindi (*Anupamaa* and *Diya Aur Baati Hum*) and Marathi (*Aai Kuthe Kay Karte* and *Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha*) serials, the study explores traditional and evolving gender roles, stereotypes, power dynamics, and the socio-cultural themes embedded in these narratives.

Using qualitative and comparative research methodologies, including content and thematic analysis, the study uncovers

key differences and similarities in the portrayal of women across regional and national narratives. Hindi serials often dramatize societal changes with emotional intensity, while Marathi serials adopt a more nuanced, culturally grounded approach. The findings reveal that both mediums reflect the tension between modernity and tradition, highlighting issues such as patriarchy, marriage, motherhood, and women's aspirations for independence.

This comparative analysis contributes to the discourse on media, gender, and culture, providing valuable insights into how television shapes and reflects societal attitudes towards women in contemporary India.

Keywords: Women Portrayal, Hindi TV Serials, Marathi TV Serials, Gender Roles, Socio-cultural Analysis, Comparative Study

Introduction

Culture is the way of life for a group of people, including their beliefs, behaviors, and institutions. Including social behavior, Beliefs, arts, language, religion, food, dress, Marriage, and routines, Indian culture is a diverse mix of social norms, technologies, and traditions that originated in India. The status of women in India is strongly connected to family Including traditional roles, Family relations, regional, traditions, and festivals. The cultural image of women is a complex and often evolving representation that varies across societies. It is shaped by historical, social, and cultural factors, and can influence how women are perceived, treated, and valued.

Television, as a powerful medium, has the potential to both reflect and shape societal norms and values within the realm of entertainment, daily soaps have emerged as a dominant genre, exerting significant influence on viewer's perceptions of various social issues, including gender rules. This study focuses on a Comparative analysis of women's characterization in Hindi and Marathi television serials, two of India's most widely watched languages.

The portrayal of Women in media has been a subject of considerable scholarly and public discourse while strides have been made towards challenging traditional gender stereotypes, the medium continues to be a complex space where progressive and regressive representation coexist. Examining how these representations vary across different cultural and linguistic contexts and comparing women's characters in Hindi and Marathi television serials is imperative. This research seeks to understand the nuances in their portrayal, the underlying messages conveyed, and the potential impact on audiences.

The scope of a study explains This comparative study aims to explore and analyze the cultural representations of women characters in Hindi and Marathi television serials. By examining the prevalent stereotypes, roles, and values attributed to women in these regional television shows, the study seeks to understand how cultural norms and expectations shape the

portrayal of female characters. Identifying and analyzing common stereotypes associated with women characters in both Hindi and Marathi TV serials, such as the “damsel in distress,” the “sacrificing mother,” or the “strong, independent woman.” Exploring how cultural values and beliefs influence the portrayal of women characters, including notions of femininity, modesty, honor, and family. Examining the changes in the portrayal of women characters over time and how these changes reflect societal shifts and evolving cultural attitudes. Identifying similarities and differences in the portrayal of women characters across Hindi and Marathi TV serials, considering factors such as regional variations, historical context, and the influence of external factors like globalization. Assessing the potential impact of these portrayals on viewers, including the reinforcement of stereotypes, the promotion of gender equality, and the shaping of cultural perceptions of women. This study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics and gender representations at play in Hindi and Marathi television serials. It will also provide valuable insights into the ways in which media can both reflect and influence societal norms and values related to women.

Statement of the Problem is The portrayal of women characters in Hindi and Marathi TV serials has a significant impact on societal attitudes and perceptions of gender roles. Despite the growing awareness around gender equality, TV serials often reinforce traditional stereotypes and sometimes depict women in roles that perpetuate patriarchal norms. This study aims to compare the portrayal of women in Hindi and Marathi TV serials, examining how cultural contexts influence these depictions. It seeks to explore whether these serials contribute to the empowerment of women or if they continue to reinforce regressive stereotypes, thus affecting the viewers’ perception of women’s roles in society. The study will analyze character roles, behaviors, and narratives, and assess the potential influence of these portrayals on the audience’s understanding of gender dynamics. For this purpose, the researcher has selected two TV serials each from Hindi and Marathi respectively based on the common storyline and characterisation. The two Hindi serials include Anupamaa and Diya Aur baati hum and the Marathi serials Aai kuthe kay Karte! And Ya fulala sugandha maticha.

Aims and objectives of the Study

The aim of Research project Is undertake a research study on the women characters as portrayed in the popular Marathi and Hindi TV serials to compare and contrast the cultural nuances involved in it.

Objectives

1. To identify and analyze the predominant stereotypes and archetypes associated with female characters in Hindi and Marathi TV serials.
2. To compare and contrast the representation of women’s roles, agency, and empowerment in these two regional TV industries.
3. To explore the impact of cultural factors, such as patriarchy, religion, and regional identity, on the portrayal of female characters.
4. To examine the evolution of female character representation over time in both Hindi and Marathi TV serials.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and comparative research design to analyze the socio-cultural portrayal of women characters in Hindi and Marathi television serials. The approach primarily involves content analysis and thematic analysis, enabling a detailed examination of character roles, narrative structures, and socio-cultural themes. The research focuses on four selected serials: Anupamaa and Diya Aur Baati Hum from Hindi television, and Aai Kuthe Kay Karte and Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha from Marathi television. These serials were chosen based on their popularity, critical acclaim, and the centrality of women characters in their narratives.

The primary data comprises episodes of these serials, analyzed for recurring themes, dialogues, character arcs, and visual representation. Secondary data includes academic literature, journal articles, and critiques related to the portrayal of women in Indian television. The analysis is guided by an analytical framework that examines key categories: gender roles, stereotyping, power dynamics, visual representation, and social themes. These categories help to uncover both traditional and evolving portrayals of women and to explore how cultural nuances and socio-economic factors influence these depictions.

The study also incorporates a comparative element, contrasting the national narratives typically found in Hindi serials with the culturally specific narratives of Marathi serials. While Hindi serials often dramatize societal changes with emotional intensity, Marathi serials offer nuanced portrayals rooted in regional culture. This methodology highlights how television serials reflect and shape societal attitudes toward gender, making it a valuable tool for understanding the intersection of media, culture, and gender in India.

Hypothesis

1. The cultural nuances and regional differences between Hindi and Marathi societies influence the portrayal of women characters, leading to distinct stereotypes and expectations in each language’s serials.
2. The evolving socio-political landscape and changing audience preferences impact the portrayal of women characters in both Hindi and Marathi TV serials, with a gradual shift towards more diverse and complex representation.
3. The portrayal of women characters in Hindi and Marathi TV serials is influenced by the dominant narratives and themes prevalent in the respective industries, such as family dramas, love stories, and social issues.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this research project focuses on the socio-cultural portrayal of women characters in Hindi and Marathi TV serials. A qualitative approach is utilized to interpret the primary and secondary data, with an emphasis on identifying recurring patterns, themes, and socio-cultural nuances in the narratives of the selected serials: Anupamaa, Diya Aur Baati Hum, Aai Kuthe Kay Karte, and Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha.

Content analysis is conducted by reviewing episodes of these serials to extract data on dialogue, character arcs, plot development, and visual elements such as costumes and

body language. Thematic analysis is used to categorize these findings into key areas, including gender roles, stereotyping, power dynamics, and social themes. This categorization allows for an in-depth examination of traditional versus modern roles, the persistence of stereotypes, and the ways women assert agency within patriarchal structures.

The comparative analysis highlights differences and similarities between Hindi and Marathi serials. Hindi serials often emphasize emotional intensity and dramatization, presenting women in polarizing roles—either as sacrificial figures or antagonists. In contrast, Marathi serials depict women through a more culturally grounded and nuanced lens, reflecting the region's socio-cultural ethos.

Secondary data, including academic literature and media critiques, complements the primary analysis, providing context and supporting the interpretation of findings. This dual approach ensures a holistic understanding of how women are portrayed in Indian television and the socio-cultural factors influencing these portrayals.

The findings from this analysis underscore the interplay between tradition and modernity in shaping women's roles, offering insights into regional and national narratives and their impact on societal attitudes toward gender.

The socio cultural portrayal of Anupamaa character in Anupamaa serial

The Hindi TV serial Anupamaa presents a complex and evolving portrayal of its titular character, reflecting the socio-cultural expectations, struggles, and transformations of Indian women. Anupamaa, played by Rupali Ganguly, embodies traditional gender roles while also challenging societal norms through her personal growth and empowerment. Traditional Gender Roles and Family Expectations of the character Anupamaa. At the beginning of the serial, Anupamaa is portrayed as a devoted housewife, mother, and daughter-in-law who prioritizes her family's needs over her own aspirations. Her character aligns with the traditional Indian ideal of a self-sacrificing woman, emphasizing cultural values of obedience, patience, and unconditional love. She is financially dependent on her husband, Vanraj, and her role within the household revolves around caregiving and domestic responsibilities.

Subjugation and Gender Stereotypes of the character. Anupamaa's initial portrayal highlights deeply ingrained patriarchal structures where women's contributions to the household are undervalued. Despite her dedication, she faces emotional neglect and disrespect from her husband and in-laws. Her lack of formal education and financial independence further reinforce the stereotype that a woman's primary role is within the home, not the workforce. The narrative also depicts how Indian society often overlooks a homemaker's sacrifices, treating them as an obligation rather than a choice.

Empowerment and Breaking Stereotypes of the character. A pivotal moment in Anupamaa's journey is her realization of self-worth after discovering her husband's betrayal. This marks a turning point where she challenges societal norms by prioritizing her independence. Her decision to pursue education, seek employment, and make life choices based on her personal happiness represents a shift from the submissive housewife to an empowered individual. Unlike traditional portrayals of "strong women" who immediately rebel, Anupamaa's growth is gradual, reflecting the reality of many Indian women who navigate cultural constraints

while asserting their agency.

Power Dynamics and Independence in the serial Throughout the show, Anupamaa gradually reclaims power in her personal and professional life. She steps out of her husband's shadow, starts working, and engages in self-improvement. However, her empowerment is not depicted as a radical break from tradition but rather as an evolution within cultural boundaries. She continues to value family relationships while redefining them on her terms, showcasing a balance between tradition and modernity. Social Themes and Cultural Representation in the serial. The serial addresses several socio-cultural issues through Anupamaa's journey, including. Patriarchal and Gender Inequality the show critiques the lack of appreciation for homemakers and the expectation that women should endure disrespect in marriage. Divorce and Second Chances Anupamaa's divorce is a rare portrayal of a middle-aged woman choosing self-respect over societal judgment. Women's Financial Independence in the serial Her pursuit of a career highlights the importance of economic self-sufficiency. Her Motherhood and Identity While she remains a devoted mother, she learns to separate her identity from just being a caregiver. Cultural Relevance and Impact of Anupamaa's character resonates with a broad audience, particularly women who have experienced similar struggles. The show's success reflects changing societal attitudes toward women's empowerment while acknowledging the cultural challenges that come with it. Her journey serves as an inspiration for women to prioritize self-respect and personal growth without completely rejecting traditional values.

Anupamaa's character embodies the evolving identity of Indian women—rooted in tradition but striving for autonomy. The show's portrayal of her transformation challenges conventional stereotypes while maintaining a realistic representation of cultural expectations. Through Anupamaa, the serial encourages conversations on gender roles, self-worth, and empowerment, making her a significant figure in the socio-cultural discourse of Indian television.

The Socio-Cultural Portrayal of Kavya's Character in Anupamaa Serial

Kavya Gandhi, played by Madalsa Sharma in Anupamaa, is a complex character who challenges traditional stereotypes of women in Indian television. Unlike the self-sacrificing and family-oriented Anupamaa, Kavya represents modern, career-driven women who prioritize their ambitions and desires. Her character embodies the conflict between traditional gender expectations and contemporary aspirations, making her an important figure in the socio-cultural discourse of the show. Independent and Career-Oriented Woman. Kavya is introduced as a strong, independent woman working as a corporate professional. She is financially self-sufficient, confident, and vocal about her needs—traits that contrast sharply with Anupamaa's initial portrayal as a submissive housewife. Kavya's character represents the modern Indian woman who values her career and refuses to be confined by domestic responsibilities.

Breaking Traditional Gender Norms. Unlike the stereotypical "ideal woman" in Indian TV serials, Kavya does not conform to the traditional expectations of being a devoted wife or mother figure. She openly challenges

societal norms by pursuing a romantic relationship with Vanraj despite him being married to Anupamaa. While her actions are often depicted negatively, they highlight the growing acceptance of women making choices for their happiness, even if they go against conventional morality. The “Other Woman” Stereotype and Social Judgment. One of the key socio-cultural themes in Kavya’s character arc is how women who defy traditional roles are often vilified. She is labeled as a “homewrecker” for being in a relationship with Vanraj while he is still married. This reflects a common societal bias where women are disproportionately blamed for extramarital affairs, whereas men’s actions are often justified or overlooked. Kavya’s struggles illustrate how women who assert their desires are frequently judged more harshly than men in similar situations.

Power Struggles and Emotional Vulnerability. Despite her outward confidence, Kavya’s character is also portrayed as emotionally insecure and possessive, especially after marrying Vanraj. She seeks validation from him and fears losing control over their relationship. This reflects the paradox many modern women face—while they are independent and strong-willed, they still struggle with societal expectations around relationships and marriage. Her emotional vulnerabilities make her character more human and relatable rather than a one-dimensional antagonist. **Marriage, Insecurity, and Patriarchy.** After her marriage to Vanraj, Kavya’s relationship dynamics shift significantly. She realizes that even though she is independent, she is still expected to conform to traditional gender roles as a wife and daughter-in-law. Her struggles with Vanraj’s family highlight how patriarchal structures continue to control women’s lives, regardless of their financial or professional success. This also serves as a contrast to Anupamaa’s post-divorce journey, where she gains independence rather than being confined by marriage.

Comparative Portrayal between two characters Kavya vs. Anupamaa. Kavya and Anupamaa represent two contrasting yet intertwined aspects of womanhood in Indian society: Anupamaa is the traditional, selfless woman who gains empowerment through self-realization. Kavya is the ambitious, outspoken woman who faces societal resistance despite her independence. While Anupamaa’s struggles are rooted in family obligations, Kavya’s conflicts stem from her defiance of traditional norms. **Social Themes and Cultural Reflections.** Kavya’s character brings out important socio-cultural issues, such as The stigma against independent women She is often seen as too ambitious or aggressive, reflecting how society still expects women to be submissive. Double standards in relationships While Vanraj’s affair is excused by many, Kavya is constantly judged for the same relationship. The illusion of empowerment Despite her independence, she still craves acceptance from Vanraj and struggles with patriarchal expectations.

Kavya’s character in Anupamaa serves as a thought-provoking portrayal of modern Indian women navigating love, career, and societal judgment. She is neither a perfect role model nor a complete antagonist but a layered character who embodies the challenges faced by women who refuse to conform to traditional roles. Through Kavya, the serial highlights the complexities of gender expectations and the evolving definition of female empowerment in Indian society.

The Socio-Cultural Portrayal of Arundhati’s Character in Aai Kuthe Kay Karte Serial

Arundhati, the protagonist of the Marathi TV serial Aai Kuthe Kay Karte, represents the journey of a traditional Indian housewife who reclaims her identity after years of self-sacrifice. Played by Madhurani Gokhale-Prabhulkar, her character resonates with many women who face societal expectations of being the perfect wife, mother, and daughter-in-law while suppressing their personal aspirations. The serial highlights the emotional and social struggles of women within patriarchal family structures and their gradual empowerment. **Traditional Gender Roles and Self-Sacrifice.** At the start of the show, Arundhati is depicted as a devoted homemaker who has spent years prioritizing her family’s needs over her own desires. Like many women in Indian households, she is expected to manage household chores, raise children, and cater to her husband and in-laws without seeking personal growth or financial independence. This reflects the deeply ingrained societal norm where a woman’s worth is measured by her ability to serve her family.

The Invisible Struggles of Homemakers. Despite her unwavering dedication, Arundhati is undervalued by her husband, Aniruddha, and taken for granted by her children. The serial sheds light on how the contributions of housewives are often overlooked, reinforcing the idea that their work is an obligation rather than a choice. Her silent suffering is a reflection of countless women who are expected to endure emotional neglect without questioning their circumstances. **Betrayal and the Breaking of Illusions.** A turning point in Arundhati’s journey comes when she discovers her husband’s extramarital affair. This moment serves as a catalyst for her transformation, forcing her to confront the harsh reality of her unfulfilled life. Unlike many traditional serials where women either tolerate betrayal or seek revenge, Aai Kuthe Kay Karte takes a more realistic approach, portraying Arundhati’s emotional turmoil and gradual realization of self-worth.

Empowerment and Self-Discovery Arundhati’s post-betrayal journey is an inspiring portrayal of a woman who chooses dignity and self-respect over societal pressure. Rather than playing the victim, she slowly builds her own identity, stepping out of her role as just a wife and mother. She begins to pursue her long-lost interests, learns to make independent decisions, and gains financial self-sufficiency. This shift challenges the stereotype that women should sacrifice personal happiness for the sake of family stability. **Power Dynamics and Societal Expectations** Even after separating from Aniruddha, Arundhati continues to face societal judgment. Her decision to prioritize herself is met with resistance, reflecting the cultural belief that a woman’s duty is to maintain family harmony at all costs. The serial effectively highlights the societal double standards—while men moving on after divorce is normalized, women are often expected to remain devoted to their broken marriages. **Motherhood and Changing Relationships** As a mother, Arundhati’s character explores the complexities of parenting within a fractured family. She navigates the challenge of maintaining a strong bond with her children while also asserting her newfound independence. The serial portrays how women, even after separation, are expected to be the primary caregivers, reinforcing traditional gender roles while also showing the evolving dynamics of motherhood. **Cultural Reflection and Realistic Representation** Unlike

many serials that rely on excessive melodrama, *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte* presents a grounded and relatable depiction of a woman's struggles. Arundhati's character mirrors the lives of countless Indian women who silently endure societal expectations but eventually find the courage to redefine their existence. The serial captures the delicate balance between tradition and modernity, showcasing how empowerment does not always mean rejecting cultural values but rather reshaping them on one's own terms.

Arundhati's character in *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte* serves as a powerful representation of middle-aged women reclaiming their agency. Her journey challenges the conventional notion that a woman's life revolves solely around her family, offering a refreshing perspective on self-discovery and independence. Through her struggles and triumphs, the serial delivers a strong social message about recognizing the value of homemakers, encouraging women to pursue their dreams, and redefining the meaning of strength and dignity in a patriarchal society.

The Socio-Cultural Portrayal of Sanjana's Character in *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte* Serial

Sanjana, played by Deepali Pansare in *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte*, is a complex character who challenges traditional notions of morality, relationships, and gender roles. Unlike the self-sacrificing and family-oriented Arundhati, Sanjana is depicted as a modern, independent woman who prioritizes her desires over societal expectations. Her character represents the evolving role of women in Indian society, highlighting the conflict between personal freedom and cultural norms.

The Modern, Independent Woman. Sanjana is portrayed as a career-oriented, confident, and outspoken woman. She does not conform to the stereotypical image of a docile and sacrificing Indian woman. Her financial independence and assertiveness challenge the traditional belief that women should be submissive and dependent on men for security. She is unapologetic about her choices, which makes her stand out in a household that values conventional gender roles.

The "Other Woman" Stereotype and Societal Judgment Sanjana is often perceived as the antagonist in Arundhati's life because of her relationship with Aniruddha, a married man. She is labeled as a "homewrecker," reinforcing the common social bias where women are disproportionately blamed for extramarital affairs, while men are often excused. This portrayal reflects how society views women who defy traditional marital boundaries—not as individuals with agency but as threats to family values. **Feminine Agency vs. Moral Policing.** Despite being independent, Sanjana faces constant judgment and criticism, both from Aniruddha's family and society. Her character highlights the double standards women face—while men can easily remarry and move on, women who break societal norms are vilified. She represents the struggles of women who assert their agency in a culture that still expects them to prioritize family and social approval over personal happiness.

Relationship with Aniruddha Power and Dependency. Although Sanjana appears strong, her relationship with Aniruddha reveals emotional vulnerability. She believes that love and companionship justify her choices, but she soon realizes that breaking societal norms does not necessarily lead to a fulfilling relationship. After marrying Aniruddha, she faces the same insecurities and struggles for acceptance

that she once dismissed as irrelevant. This shift in her character arc shows that even modern women are not immune to the emotional burdens imposed by patriarchal structures.

Family Conflict and Struggles for Acceptance. Sanjana's entry into Aniruddha's household is met with resistance, particularly from his children and ex-wife. She struggles to be accepted, despite her efforts to integrate into the family. This reflects the social reality that stepmothers or second wives are often seen as outsiders, regardless of their intentions. Her character sheds light on the challenges faced by women who enter established family structures, where they are often judged rather than embraced.

Contrasting with Arundhati: Two Sides of Womanhood. Sanjana and Arundhati represent two contrasting yet interconnected aspects of womanhood in Indian society: Arundhati embodies patience, self-sacrifice, and resilience, representing traditional values. Sanjana symbolizes ambition, independence, and defiance of social norms, representing modernity. Their interactions highlight the tension between traditional and contemporary expectations of women, showing that both self-sacrifice and self-assertion come with challenges. **Social Themes and Cultural Reflections** Sanjana's character touches on important socio-cultural issues, such as The stigma against independent women— She is often perceived as too ambitious and aggressive. Double standards in relationships While Aniruddha's infidelity is somewhat excused, Sanjana is judged more harshly. The illusion of empowerment Despite her confidence, she still seeks validation and struggles with emotional insecurities.

Sanjana's character in *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte* serves as a thought-provoking representation of modern women navigating relationships, career ambitions, and societal judgment. She is not a one-dimensional antagonist but a layered character who embodies the complexities of gender expectations in Indian culture. Through her journey, the serial highlights the ongoing conflict between tradition and modernity, making her an essential figure in the show's socio-cultural narrative.

The Socio-Cultural Portrayal of Sandhya's Character in *Diya Aur Baati Hum* Serial

Sandhya Rathi, played by Deepika Singh in *Diya Aur Baati Hum*, is a significant character in Indian television who represents the evolving role of women in a traditional society. Her journey from an aspiring IPS officer to a dutiful wife and daughter-in-law challenges stereotypes and highlights the struggle between personal ambitions and societal expectations. The serial presents Sandhya as a woman who defies conventions while still respecting cultural values, making her an inspiring yet relatable figure.

Breaking Traditional Gender Roles. Sandhya is introduced as an intelligent and ambitious young woman who dreams of becoming an IPS officer. However, her aspirations are challenged when she is married off into a conservative Rajasthani family that believes a woman's primary duty is to manage the household. Her character represents the conflict many women face between personal ambitions and family obligations, highlighting the cultural expectation that a woman's success should not come at the cost of her domestic responsibilities. **The Role of Marriage in a Woman's Life.** After her marriage to Sooraj, Sandhya's life takes a drastic turn. She struggles to adjust to the rigid

norms of her in-laws, where a daughter-in-law is expected to be submissive and prioritize family over personal goals. This reflects the societal pressure placed on women to conform to traditional roles after marriage. However, unlike many serials where the protagonist sacrifices her dreams, *Diya Aur Baati Hum* portrays Sandhya's gradual transformation as she finds a way to balance both her career and family life.

The Supportive Husband and Changing Power Dynamics. Significant aspect of Sandhya's journey is her relationship with her husband, Sooraj. Initially, he is unaware of her ambitions, but once he understands her passion, he becomes her strongest support system. This dynamic is crucial in challenging the stereotype that a wife must always conform to her husband's wishes. Instead, the show presents an evolved perspective where a husband supports his wife's dreams, reflecting the changing role of men in a progressive society.

Women's Empowerment and Social Resistance. As Sandhya pursues her IPS training, she faces resistance not only from her in-laws but also from society. Her character highlights the struggles women endure when they choose unconventional careers, especially in male-dominated fields like law enforcement. Despite these challenges, Sandhya's determination and resilience symbolize the empowerment of women who refuse to be confined by traditional roles. **Motherhood and Personal Sacrifices.** Later in the serial, Sandhya's journey explores the complexities of balancing motherhood with a demanding career. She faces difficult choices, reinforcing the societal expectation that women must bear the greater burden of family responsibilities. However, the show presents an evolving narrative where Sandhya does not give up her career for the sake of her family but instead finds ways to manage both, challenging the notion that professional success and family life are mutually exclusive.

Visual Representation and Cultural Identity. Sandhya's attire evolves throughout the series, symbolizing her transition from a traditional daughter-in-law to an empowered woman. In the early episodes, she is seen wearing simple sarees and covering her head in front of elders, signifying respect for tradition. As she grows into her role as an IPS officer, her uniform becomes a powerful symbol of her strength and independence. This visual transformation mirrors the broader theme of balancing modernity with cultural identity.

Social Themes and Cultural Impact. Sandhya's character addresses several important socio-cultural issues **Women in Law Enforcement** The show promotes the idea that women can excel in traditionally male-dominated fields. **The Role of Men in Women's Empowerment** Sooraj's support challenges the stereotype that husbands must be dominant decision-makers. **The Struggle Between Tradition and Modernity.** Sandhya respects cultural values but does not let them restrict her growth. **Family Expectations vs. Personal Ambition** Her journey resonates with many Indian women who navigate societal pressures while striving for independence. Sandhya's character in *Diya Aur Baati Hum* is a groundbreaking portrayal of women's empowerment within a traditional Indian setting. She challenges patriarchal norms while respecting cultural values, making her an inspiring yet realistic figure. Her journey highlights the evolving role of women in Indian society, proving that personal ambition and family responsibilities can coexist.

Through Sandhya, the show delivers a strong social message about gender equality, perseverance, and the importance of supportive relationships in empowering women.

The Socio-Cultural Portrayal of Santosh (Bhabho's) Character in Diya Aur Baati Hum Serial

Bhabho, played by Neelu Vaghela in *Diya Aur Baati Hum*, is a central figure who embodies the traditional matriarch of a conservative Indian family. She represents the deep-rooted customs, societal norms, and expectations placed on women, especially daughters-in-law, in a patriarchal setup. Throughout the series, her character undergoes transformation, reflecting the gradual shift in Indian society's attitudes toward women's roles in family and professional life.

The Traditional Matriarch and Custodian of Cultural Values Bhabho is the head of the Rathi family, a strong-willed and authoritative mother-in-law who upholds traditional values. She believes in strict gender roles where women are expected to be homemakers, obedient to their husbands and elders. Her initial resistance to Sandhya's ambitions highlights the generational gap between conservative ideals and modern aspirations. Her character represents the deep-seated belief in patriarchal traditions, where a woman's primary duty is to serve her family. She enforces these rules on her daughters-in-law, expecting them to prioritize domestic responsibilities over personal ambitions. **The Conflict Between Tradition and Modernity** One of the central themes in *Diya Aur Baati Hum* is the clash between Bhabho's rigid mindset and Sandhya's aspirations to become an IPS officer. Bhabho initially views Sandhya's education and career goals as a threat to the family's reputation. She believes that a "good" daughter-in-law should be devoted to household duties and fears that a working woman will neglect her familial obligations. Her resistance to Sandhya's career reflects the societal expectations placed on women, especially in rural and semi-urban India, where families often discourage women from pursuing demanding professions.

The Evolution of Bhabho's Character Over time, Bhabho's character undergoes significant development. Despite her initial opposition, she gradually begins to understand Sandhya's dedication and strength. When she sees Sandhya balance her duties as a daughter-in-law, wife, and police officer, she starts to respect her resilience. This transformation symbolizes the slow but steady acceptance of women's empowerment within traditional Indian families. It also highlights how exposure to new experiences and changing times can lead even the most conservative individuals to reconsider their beliefs. **The Duality of Her Character: Tough but Loving** While Bhabho is portrayed as a strict and often harsh authority figure, she also has a deep love for her family. Her strictness stems from a belief that she is protecting the family's honor and well-being. She is not entirely against progress but fears change, reflecting the mindset of many traditional Indian mothers-in-law. Despite her rigid nature, she has moments of vulnerability where her deep care for her children and daughters-in-law is evident. Her love for Sandhya grows over time, and she eventually becomes one of her strongest supporters.

Representation of Indian Mother-in-Law Archetypes Bhabho's character reflects the classic Indian mother-in-law archetype seen in many households and television dramas. She represents **The Authority Figure** She dictates household

rules and ensures family traditions are maintained. The Protector of Family Honor She prioritizes societal expectations over individual desires. The Resistant but Evolving Character Initially opposed to change but gradually adapts to new values. Her character resonates with many Indian viewers who have witnessed similar dynamics in their own families. Social Themes Reflected in Bhabho's Character Bhabho's journey in the serial highlights several socio-cultural issues Gender Expectations The belief that women should prioritize family over careers. Intergenerational Conflicts The struggle between traditional elders and younger generations seeking change. Women's Empowerment The gradual acceptance of women stepping into roles beyond domestic spaces. The Role of Family in Personal Growth How family support (or resistance) shapes women's choices and opportunities.

Bhabho's character in *Diya Aur Baati Hum* serves as a mirror to many Indian households, where traditions and modernity often clash. Her journey from a rigid enforcer of patriarchy to a more understanding and accepting mother-in-law reflects the slow but inevitable evolution of societal attitudes toward women's empowerment. By the end of the series, she stands as a symbol of change, proving that even the most deep-rooted traditions can adapt to new realities when love and understanding are involved.

The Socio-Cultural Portrayal of Kirti's Character in Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha Serial

Kirti, the protagonist of *Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha*, represents the aspirations, struggles, and evolving roles of women in contemporary Marathi society. Her character embodies the tension between tradition and modernity, showcasing the challenges women face in balancing personal ambitions with societal expectations. Kirti as a Symbol of Women's Ambition. Kirti is portrayed as an educated, independent, and ambitious woman who dreams of making a mark in the professional world. Her aspirations challenge the conventional image of a woman confined to domestic roles. Through her character, the serial highlights the growing presence of women in education and the workforce, reflecting the shifting dynamics in Indian society where women are increasingly encouraged to pursue careers.

The Clash Between Family Expectations and Personal Goals. A central conflict in Kirti's journey is the resistance she faces from her family and society. Traditional norms dictate that a woman's primary duty is towards her home and family, often discouraging career-oriented aspirations. Kirti's struggles depict the challenges many women encounter when trying to assert their independence while still maintaining familial relationships. Her character resonates with many young women who find themselves at the crossroads of choosing between fulfilling societal expectations and chasing their personal dreams. Kirti's interactions with her family, in-laws, and society illustrate how deeply ingrained patriarchy influences women's lives. She is often expected to conform to traditional gender roles, such as prioritizing marriage, household responsibilities, and submissiveness to elders. The show subtly critiques these norms by portraying Kirti as a woman who, while respecting traditions, refuses to let them dictate her life entirely. This portrayal aligns with the broader feminist discourse that advocates for a woman's right to make her own choices while respecting cultural values.

Kirti's Role as a Modern Marathi Woman The show presents Kirti as a balanced character—she is not entirely rebellious but rather seeks a middle ground between tradition and modernity. She values her family and cultural roots but also stands firm in her ambitions. This reflects the evolving image of the Marathi woman who is not only responsible and family-oriented but also educated, career-driven, and independent. Her character sends a strong message that women can maintain their cultural identity while embracing progress, making her a relatable and aspirational figure for viewers.

The Evolution of Society's Perception of Women. Through Kirti's journey, the serial addresses important social themes, including: Women's Empowerment The importance of education and financial independence for women. Breaking Stereotypes Challenging the notion that a woman's primary role is to be a homemaker. Family Dynamics The changing attitudes of family members towards women's ambitions. The Role of Support Systems How having a supportive family, spouse, or friends can help women achieve their goals. As the story progresses, Kirti's determination influences those around her, leading to a gradual acceptance of her aspirations. This transformation reflects the real-life societal shift where families are becoming more supportive of women's careers.

Kirti's character in *Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha* serves as an important representation of the evolving role of women in Marathi society. Her struggles and triumphs highlight the ongoing battle between traditional expectations and modern aspirations. By portraying a strong, ambitious, and culturally rooted woman, the serial sends a powerful message about the importance of women's empowerment and the need for societal change.

The Socio-Cultural Portrayal of Chandrakala "Jiji Akka" Jamkhedkar character in Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha Serial

Chandrakala "Jiji Akka" Jamkhedkar is a significant character in *Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha*, representing the traditional matriarchal authority in a conservative family setup. Her character embodies the values of discipline, family honor, and adherence to societal norms while also reflecting the evolving role of women in positions of power within a patriarchal framework.

Jiji Akka is portrayed as a strong-willed, commanding figure who upholds the family's legacy and traditions. As the elder in the household, she exerts immense influence over family decisions, emphasizing discipline, respect for customs, and duty. Her character represents the older generation's mindset, where maintaining family honor is paramount, and women are expected to conform to traditional roles. She is not just a mother figure but a decision-maker, highlighting how women, despite operating within patriarchal norms, can hold power within the household.

A Reflection of Patriarchal Values in a Matriarchal Role Despite being a powerful woman, Jiji Akka upholds patriarchal values, reinforcing societal expectations placed on younger women, especially concerning marriage, obedience, and household responsibilities. Her interactions with Kirti, the progressive protagonist, highlight the generational clash between tradition and modern aspirations. Jiji Akka's insistence on preserving family values often puts her in conflict with Kirti's ambitions, reflecting the real-life struggles of many women who navigate between respecting

elders and asserting their independence. The Duality of Her Character: Strict but Protective While Jiji Akka Is depicted as a strict enforcer of traditions, she also deeply cares for her family. Her authority stems not from cruelty but from a belief that she is safeguarding the family's well-being. This duality makes her character more nuanced—she is not merely an antagonist to progressive ideals but a woman shaped by her own experiences and the norms of her generation. She embodies the idea that while traditions may be rigid, they can also be upheld with love and concern for the younger generation's well-being.

The Evolution of Her Perspective As the serial progresses, Jiji Akka's character undergoes subtle changes. Initially resistant to Kirti's ambitions, she gradually begins to recognize her strength and determination. This evolution mirrors the slow but inevitable change in Indian society, where older generations are beginning to acknowledge and support women's empowerment. Her transformation signifies that traditions and progress do not have to be in constant conflict; rather, they can coexist if approached with understanding and adaptability. Social Themes Reflected in Jiji Akka's Character Jiji Akka's character brings out several crucial socio-cultural themes, including: Matriarchal Power Within Patriarchy How older women often uphold patriarchal norms while holding significant authority within the household. Generational Conflict The clash between traditional expectations and modern aspirations. The Role of Women in Preserving Culture How women like Jiji Akka become the custodians of traditions, sometimes at the expense of younger women's ambitions. Gradual Social Change The idea that even the most rigid traditionalists can evolve over time.

Chandrakala "Jiji Akka" Jamkhedkar is a complex and layered character in *Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha*. She represents the older generation's deep-rooted beliefs but also serves as a testament to the possibility of change. Her portrayal reflects the reality of many Indian households, where older women, despite their authority, often uphold patriarchal norms. However, her gradual acceptance of changing times suggests that traditions can evolve, making space for women's empowerment while preserving cultural values.

➤ Content Analysis Framework

1. Gender Roles

Traditional Role

In *Anupamaa* and *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte*, women are depicted as homemakers who prioritize family over personal ambitions. Both protagonists struggle with self-identity and family expectations. In *Diya Aur Baati Hum*, the protagonist balances traditional responsibilities with a professional career (aspiring to be an IPS officer), reflecting a gradual shift in traditional roles. In *Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha*, the portrayal leans toward women managing both domestic and professional spheres but with a stronger focus on familial expectations.

Modern Roles

Hindi serials, emphasize breaking traditional molds more explicitly than Marathi serials. Marathi serials tend to depict modern roles within the bounds of tradition, balancing professional aspirations with family values.

2. Stereotyping

Common Stereotypes

Women are often shown as nurturing, self-sacrificing, and family-oriented. For instance, *Anupamaa* embodies the ideal mother and wife, while *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte*.

3. Power Dynamics

Decision-Making

In *Anupamaa* and *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte*, women initially have limited agency but gradually assert themselves in decision-making within the family. *Diya Aur Baati Hum* highlights the empowerment of women, with the protagonist making significant choices about her career and life. In *Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha*, the narrative subtly reinforces patriarchal structures despite portraying strong female characters.

Family Dynamics

Both Hindi and Marathi serials portray women as the emotional anchors of the family but often within patriarchal frameworks.

4. Visual Representation

Dressing Styles

Both Hindi Marathi serials emphasize regional attire, such as sarees draped in traditional styles, emphasizing cultural identity. Women in Hindi serials (*Diya Aur Baati Hum*) often wear sarees or modern ethnic outfits that signify a mix of tradition and modernity. Marathi serials emphasize regional attire, such as sarees draped in traditional styles, emphasizing cultural identity.

Body Language and Expressions

Hindi serials use more dramatic expressions and gestures, catering to a national audience. Marathi serials maintain a subtle and realistic portrayal, resonating with regional sensibilities.

5. Social Themes

Marriage and Motherhood

Both Hindi and Marathi serials explore these themes deeply, often portraying women as central to family unity. *Anupamaa* delves into divorce and remarriage, while *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte* explores marital discord and second chances within a conservative framework.

Patriarchy and Career

Hindi serials explicitly address career aspirations clashing with patriarchal norms. Marathi serials are subtler, reflecting the cultural conservatism of the region while still showing progressive elements. Hindi serials like *Diya Aur Baati Hum* explicitly address career aspirations clashing with patriarchal norms. Marathi serials are subtler, reflecting the cultural conservatism of the region while still showing progressive elements.

6. Comparative Analysis

Cultural Nuances

Marathi serials emphasize regional traditions and cultural values more prominently than Hindi serials, which cater to a broader national audience. Hindi serials are more likely to challenge societal norms overtly, while Marathi serials balance tradition and modernity subtly.

Socio-Economic Factors

Economic independence is more directly addressed in Hindi serials while Marathi serials often portray women within economically dependent roles, reflecting societal norms.

Findings and conclusion

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into the socio-cultural portrayal of women characters in Hindi and Marathi TV serials. Both mediums depict women as central figures within familial and societal contexts, but their portrayal reflects differences in narrative style, cultural nuances, and thematic emphasis. In Hindi serials, women often balance traditional roles as homemakers with aspirations for independence, as seen in *Anupamaa* and *Diya Aur Baati Hum*. These serials tend to dramatize the challenges faced by women, presenting their struggles and achievements with heightened emotional intensity. In contrast, Marathi serials such as *Aai Kuthe Kay Karte* and *Ya Fulala Sugandh Maticha* offer more realistic and culturally grounded portrayals. Women in these serials are depicted navigating the intersection of tradition and modernity, with a stronger emphasis on regional authenticity. The study also highlights the persistence of stereotypes in both mediums. While Hindi serials often rely on exaggerated dichotomies, portraying women as either self-sacrificing nurturers or manipulative antagonists, Marathi serials present more nuanced characters that reflect the complexity of women's roles in society. Power dynamics in both mediums show women gaining agency within familial and social decision-making, although the representation in Hindi serials tends to be more dramatic, while Marathi serials opt for subtle and restrained narratives. Visual representation further distinguishes the two mediums. Hindi serials emphasize glamour and idealized beauty, often using elaborate costumes and makeup. On the other hand, Marathi serials maintain cultural authenticity, with simpler attire and realistic visual elements that resonate with regional audiences. Both mediums address critical social themes such as patriarchy, marriage, motherhood, and career aspirations, but Marathi serials integrate these themes within a regional socio-cultural context, while Hindi serials aim for universal appeal.

Overall, the study finds that while both Hindi and Marathi TV serials reflect the evolving roles of women, their approaches differ significantly. Hindi serials prioritize dramatic storytelling with a broader appeal, while Marathi serials focus on culturally specific narratives that offer a more authentic portrayal of women's experiences and struggles.

The comparative study of Hindi and Marathi TV serials reveals that both mediums reflect the interplay of tradition and modernity in their portrayal of women. While Hindi serials dramatize societal transformation with exaggerated narratives, Marathi serials present a more grounded and culturally authentic perspective. Both, however, reinforce and challenge traditional gender roles, highlighting the evolving position of women in Indian society. This research underscores the importance of television as a medium that both shapes and reflects societal attitudes toward gender. By examining these portrayals, the study contributes to the discourse on media, culture, and gender, offering insights into how regional and national narratives impact societal perceptions of women. Future research could expand this

study by exploring other regional serials or analyzing audience reception to these portrayals.

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