



International Journal of Contemporary Research In Multidisciplinary

Research Article

Cultural Codes and Gendered Hierarchies: A Critical Reading of Women's Status in The Puranas

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17263302>

Abstract

The paper also unfairly examines how the status of women was viewed in the Puranas, ancient scriptures in the Hindu religion, through the perception of cultural codes and hierarchies extolled by gender. The paper will also attempt to understand how these texts affirm the traditional gender roles and power, among other things; what is of interest in the study is the literal and figurative representation of women in the mythological literature. In accordance with the qualitative approach, the paper will apply textual analysis and exposition of the most important Puranic compositions to identify the purpose of the woman and her representation. They also suggest that women are represented in a multifaceted yet rich representation in the Puranas with the diverse roles they perform as mothers, goddesses, and warriors. In most cases, they are expected to adhere to a rigid system as defined by the society that enforces the patriarchal systems. Such topics as contribution, occurrence of moral responsibility, and lifetime operations are quite impressive with the gendered hierarchy of writings, according to the study. The conclusions drawn about the implications of the research in the result of this study have been the permanently present attributes of Puranic stories on how modern societies view the roles of women and the continuity of gender inequality in contemporary society. This research study incorporates the need to re-analyze the traditional texts, a critical aspect of which would provide certain light on the issue of feminism and the stage of gender analysis using ancient texts.

Manuscript Information

- ISSN No: 2583-7397
- Received: 12-08-2025
- Accepted: 22-09-2025
- Published: 04-10-2025
- IJCRM:4(5); 2025: 242-250
- ©2025, All Rights Reserved
- Plagiarism Checked: Yes
- Peer Review Process: Yes

How to Cite this Article

Yadav R, Mishra S K. Cultural Codes and Gendered Hierarchies: A Critical Reading of Women's Status in The Puranas. Int J Contemp Res Multidiscip. 2025;4(5):242-250.

Access this Article Online



www.multiarticlesjournal.com

KEYWORDS: Puranas, gendered hierarchies, cultural codes, women's status, mythology, feminist critique.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background: One can know about the spiritual, historical, and cultural composition of the early Indian society through the Puranas, which are a set of uploaded palm-leaf Hindu scriptures. The prominent features of these works were huge mythological epics that assume religious and social norms that can imply both the supernatural and the world [1]. However, the discussion of the representations of women by the actors in the

Puranas will demonstrate that it is the combination of cultural codes and female hierarchies. Women in said works are in many of those categories of relations instead of the standards of classic forms of virtues, e.g., fertility, devotion, and purity, but they are usually interwoven with patriarchal restraints.

Research Problem: Despite the conduction of several studies in relation to religious and spiritual issues of the Puranas, not

much focus can be directed to the gendered ways the Puranas write [2]. Specifically, a shortcoming is in the critical discourses of how the cultural codes of such ancient manuscripts have been used to lead to the social outlook of women and gender disparity.

2. OBJECTIVES

The study aims to:

1. Explore the representation of women in selected Puranic texts.
2. Analyse how cultural codes contribute to the construction of gendered hierarchies.
3. Examine the impact of these representations on contemporary understandings of gender roles.

Justification

The significance of the paper lies in the attempt to fill the gap that is present between the conservative literature concerning religion and the modern feminist approach of analysis. The paper will contribute to the overall understanding of ancient texts in establishing the modern society and the perception of gender by analyzing the Puranas, biased [3]. Moreover, it will provide meaningful energy to the contemporary feminist discourse, particularly South Asian culture and mythology.

Research Questions

1. How are women portrayed in the Puranas, and what roles are they assigned?
2. What cultural codes within the Puranas reinforce gendered hierarchies?
3. How do the representations of women in the Puranas reflect and influence contemporary gender roles in South Asian society?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to a study conducted by Mandal (2025), the article provides a sufficient amount of analysis of the functions and privileges of women in ancient India on the basis of the Hindu legal literature. It also considers how social norms influenced the lives of women, particularly in what they could study and their ability to advance intellectually, besides the expectations of the community that made them change their status [4]. Family institutions are also a subject covered in the paper, which includes the rights of women in the family, marriage relationship, and the wrathful practices, such as the niyoga, as well as the sati. Legal Matrimonial, polygamy and divorce, polygamy, polyandry are mentioned, and it is also spoken of the right of women over their property, sisters as heirs and supporters. The paper presents varying advantages of gender relations and rights that were granted to widows, such as

adoption, guardianship, and maintenance, which is a sensitive interpretation of the status of women in ancient India before the law.

The research by Serrano Munoz (2023) on the topic contends that Serrano Munoz develops his argument of the idea of these female representations of Hindutva to the perceptions of the whole nation, and allows the authors of the fourth wave of the Indian feminist movement to break the patriarchal standpoint. The aspect of interest is the development of graphic novels and independent comics to become a part of the feminist discourse as a response and further mode of thinking against the dominant ideologies of Hindutva. The artistic and intellectual countermeasure, the attempt to ruin the fixed identities and newly empowering ones in India, of women is symbolized in the selected materials, including graphic novels and comic items, etc. [5]. These works are analyzed in the dissertation, typical of how they bring about the problem of gender, caste, and social inequality as aggravated in the relations to vulnerability and resiliency within the male gender. The paper emphasizes the importance of production in the current feminist movement, and the most extensive contribution in terms of marketing of these stories is innovation in utilizing the latest technologies and social media. With the task of re-creating traditional gender roles, these publications are actually the ones that should lead to a more equal society. These readings are quite different in theme, as they are remotely referred to in the dissertation, where they transform the accounts of helplessness into acts of resistance and empowerment in the context of the larger social cause of gender equality in India.

The article is about the problem of gender inequality that remains prevalent both in scholarly formations, specifically, the paper narrows down to the new public management (NPM) and its contribution to gendered universities [6]. Within the article, the author examines the effects of NPM through the prism of efficiency, market-oriented policies, and performance targets that tend to augment feminine inequalities within the institutions of higher learning. It illuminates the existing restraint that women, particularly foreigners who belong to distinct religious-socio-cultural paradigms, have in the bodies of knowledge production and greater academic hierarchies. Gender disparities are still present in academia; furthermore, alongside the rise in female scholars, it means the deficit of equal opportunities for promotion in their respective fields and gender-specific requirements. As hypothesized in the research, even though NPM was created to make academic systems easier and improve them, the reality that in the majority of instances, the issues of gender aspects of academic power and location are not taken into consideration, perpetuates historical inequity.

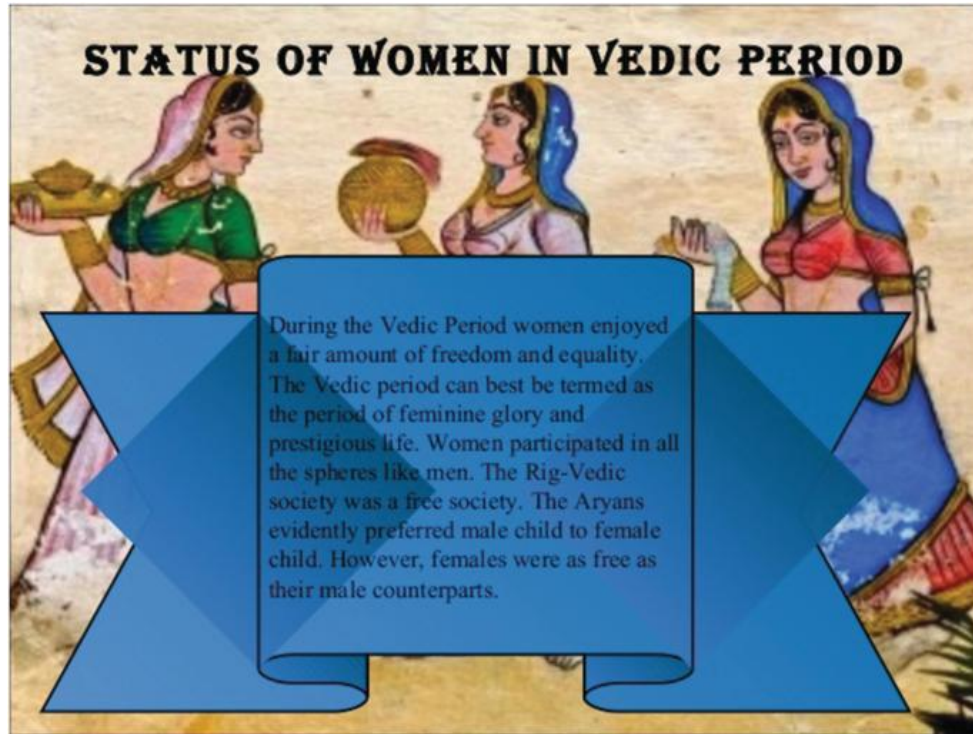


Figure 1: Women's Status in the Puranas

Theoretical Framework

It is based on the feminist theory and, in particular, on the concept of the Other by Simone de Beauvoir, whose concept applies to the current scenario of the depiction of women as the subjugated to the male counterparts in the religious writings [7]. Moreover, it is possible to ponder over the female structures of authority as practiced in a religious discourse by transferring the slogan of power and the cultural codes of Michel Foucault.

Research Gaps

Further research on Puranas has not been conducted on the texts, despite ample theorizing about the texts in terms of how the cultural codes ensure repetition of macro-perceived gendered hierarchies [8]. The unity of the genders, caste, and the classes in the Puranas has also not been studied effectively. The given study will seek to fill these gaps in an attempt to find out the critical point of feminism concerning a cultural interpretation of gender roles in the Puranas.

4. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adheres to the qualitative method of research in arguing out the processes of portraying the women in the Puranas, which are a core part of the Hindu myth and culture. The paper will also attempt to establish the gender relations and cultural codes in these early writings through textual analysis. The conversation of granting advantages stories, as highlighted in the Puranas, particularly Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, and Devi Purana, shows how women are depicted as attaining.

Dissimilar projects as worshiped goddesses or victorious beings. The writings can be assumed to play a significant role in Hinduism.

Mythology, and the interpretation of the same, is very crucial when discussing the historical and cultural representations of women.

To complete the research, the qualitative methodology would suit best as the puranic texts are very saturated with symbolism and cultural undertones, and therefore can be understood only at the level of a qualitative methodology. Rather than the comparison of numbers or broad generalization, the qualitative approach is focused on the derivation of explanations, categories, and tendencies, which will inform the perception of how masculinity and power are constructed in these religious books [9]. Through this, this study attempts to learn how gender positions are represented and how the positions establish hierarchies within the society, and how the display of culture, such as the Puranas, shapes the gender position of the woman as part of both the divinity and the earthly world.

Sampling

In this study, a purposive sample is selected from selected episodes of Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, and Devi Bhagavata Purana that are related to the present research due to the domination of female protagonists or deities. Non-random sampling is known as purposive sampling, whereby the researcher is required to select the individuals or texts based on some basis or simply because of interest in the research questions. This case focuses on the identification passages that

constitute key female characters such as Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, and Sita.

These figures are central to the mythology in the Hindu religion and typically in the shape of idealized virtues of money, knowledge, power, and piety [10]. Any roles they play and treatment of such roles in the texts are, however, very heterogeneous since some of them are represented as obedient concubines to male deities, whereas others are treated as self-sufficient and self-governing deities. The readings that were selected are a tremendous variety of female experiences and roles of faithful mothers, loving wives, vicious goddesses, and warriors who are self-reliant. The analysis of these readings will assist the paper in establishing the empowering and subordinating impression of the gender representation, particularly looking at the cultural codes that may support those representations.

With regard to sample characteristics, the analysis will focus on narrative episodes since they form some of the valuable content in the description of roles and treatment of women in the texts employed in the study. Such episodes are studied as belonging to their history and theology, and the way they contributed to the construction of the hierarchy of gender and the cultural norms.

Data Collection

Data collection of this study will be by close reading and content analysis of selected Puranic texts. Close reading refers to a form of reading into the text, the purpose of which consists in experiencing the language, structure, and meanings of a text. By making a calculated analysis of the story, words, and descriptions of the female characters, the researcher will be able to identify common themes, symbols, and motifs regarding gender, power, and roles in society.

It also uses a systematic analysis of data through the use of categorization and interpretation by performing a content analysis. It puts the stress on the identification and categorization of the various female characters and roles in the Puranas, particularly the attenuated language and cultural codes [11]. It entails marking of significant passages that are about female power, agency, submission, and transformation in the texts. The contribution of such representations to the generic cultural discourses of gender and how such representations reflected the cultural values of the societies in which these texts were written is also taken into focus in the analysis.

The studied works are some translations of the original Sanskrit manuscripts. The prejudices that might be produced by the translations are necessary, but knowing the way of collecting and interpreting these ancient readings has been perceived throughout history. In addition to the analysis of the main text, several secondary sources will be used, such as various academic articles, commentaries, and documents, which will provide more background and perspective on women that the Hindu mythology portrays.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data will be based on the use of thematic analysis as a constituent of measurement to be determined when trying to target and scrutinize the trends or themes of data of a qualitative character. In this case, thematic analysis helps the researcher to develop common motifs, symbols, and themes about the story of Puranic women. The problem that is investigated here is that gender roles are being constructed, reinforced, and challenged in the texts [12]. The study tends to discover largely how the representation of women clashes with its issues of authority, ethics, spirituality, and social needs.

The struggle between women's power and its subordination is, in fact, the issue of the data that has been disclosed as one of the central ones. The women characters in the Puranas are popularly written off as mythological women with immense power, yet once again, their power is always built in opposition to the male divine; thus, the gendered hierarchies that exist throughout the works continue to be established. One may take an example of Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune, and she has been utilized in numerous instances as a subordinate item, with her force being identified by the fact that she is a lover of Vishnu. In its vein, Saraswati, the deity of learning, is usually pictured as attending Brahma, thereby enhancing her divine capability in their dealings with male gods.

The theme analysis on how women are shaped to be nurturers and warriors is also not absent [13]. There are traditional motherhood and submissive roles of female characters, but there are other characters, such as Durga and Kali, who describe themselves as independent and free individuals, therefore making a break from the popular gender stereotyping. Such a contrasting introduction shows the conflicting character of the role of women under Hindu mythology and gives an impression of how gender identity is formed in the Puranic books.

The text is also analyzed using the feminist theory to interpret the place of such texts in perpetuating the patriarchal structure and challenging it. Power struggle and gendered relationship in these texts can be analyzed through the feminist theory, and it can also be stated that the female characters are in some way empowered and victimized by the social conventions [14]. The reflection of the broader cultural values in the image of women and how they furthered such cultural beliefs as they passed over to the treatment in the ancient Indian society, is also a theme in the paper.

Ethical Considerations

The article is ethical as the paper does not infringe on the sensibilities of the Puranic works. There are no active participants in the research since the secondary data analysis is to undertake the published versions of the Puranas. However, such texts must be handled in terms of culture since they are religious and historical collections. The researcher himself confesses that possibly they should be patterned into various meanings (and the presumptive cultural, theological).

My analysis will be done with an understanding of the possibility of bias in the preferred translations and interpretations of the Puranas. The paper also engages in the act

of establishing one of the happy and nuptial ways of delivering it together, considering a blend of a classical anti-feminist exegetical approach of the texts. By describing the problem, the study will create awareness of the current academic discourse on gender, power, and cultural codes within the Hindu mythology without manipulating and strengthening any form of misperception and cultural stereotypes.

Lastly, the qualitative research design is the close reading, content analysis, and thematic analysis under the qualitative approach of the study as a criterion to assess the presence of women in the Puranas [15]. The selective sampling of the key episodes between those that included the female protagonists and the roles of the Gods contributes to investigating the proposed subject of the gender roles and the power issues in more detail. With female theory as the direction to enlightenment, the paper will be utilized to establish the role that the cultural codes in such texts served or challenged gendered privilege, which will provide impactful figures on how ancient Indian society made division of genders, and how that affects the current views on women.

5. RESULTS

The issue of women's representation in the Puranas provides an indication of the fact that the actual image of the woman is multifaceted and many-sided and is based on both the non-divine and the divine world. Women are given a variety where each woman has to pass certain ageless gendered requirements, others break it, and others even deviate from it even subtly [16]. A keen observation of some of the most significant instances of Vishnu Purana, Bengali Purana, Bhagavata, and the Devi Bhagavata Purana helps to discover in the research a tendency of how the female characters are continually forced into the background to find a place that is secondary to the male gods and other male characters. And we have, at the same time, cases of the great women who are transcending these types of social identification; it is a conflict between the concepts of female morals and empowerment.

The ancient Gender Roles in Puranas.

In the majority of the Puranas, most of the women are placed in roles following the traditional gender roles. The goddesses, such as Lakshmi and Saraswati, are described in the form of epitomization of cold, wisdom, and motherhood, even though their powers are often put in perspective with those of their male counterparts. In a bid to put this across, Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, can be seen very closely associated with Vishnu, and her skills and power are lower than those of Vishnu. Similarly, the goddess of knowledge, Saraswati, is depicted as being a mistress of Brahma, which is also an element that emphasizes the submissive position in which women are positioned in the divine hierarchy. Such frailty of women is a reflection of the inculcated ideal of rule on the part of society, defining the role of a woman in the ancient Indian society.

These female characters, even with their divine status, are largely dealt with as complementary to the role of the male

gods to reinforce the fact that the power of the female gender is not one on its own but rather is a continuation of the relationship they have with the male gods [17]. Their role in the cosmic order is concerned with the fulfillment of the needs and responsibilities of their male counterparts, hence perpetuating the gendered order in which the extremes of power and influence are placed in the male hands.

Women as Mothers and Wives

The other, more stereotypical type of women in the Puranas is their menstrual subject matter as mothers and wives. These are the roles that are strongly tied to the necessities of society regarding women as nurturers and caretakers. The Puranas are likely to exalt the merits of ladies who perform the role of great mothers, daughters, as well as wives, who preserve the order in society by dispensing on their roles in the family. This is observed in the lineage found in the myths, such as when Sita of Ramayana took the primary role as the wife and mother of their family, even though she was so strong and able in her endeavors and did it without innocence.

In these narratives, women are widely portrayed to be self-sacrificial and beneficial to their family, their needs, and independence, but more so [18]. This representation acts to reinforce these patriarchal structures of performing acts of obedience on the side of the male dominant paradigm to the females in such roles, highlighting the level of agency being established for women in such roles.

The Woman as a Servant and a Subordinate.

Besides being mothers and wives, women are being portrayed as servants/assistants of the male character. The cultural shift that dictates the culture and habits of the Indians includes that women have to serve their husbands, fathers, and brothers, and most of the time, marriages are supposed to be submissive mandates, as dictated by the Puranas. As an example, one can speak of the depiction of the female figures of the Mahabharata, like that of Draupadi, as an example of landscape on the notions of female creatures being a subject of desire for men and ownership, and the functions of female creatures having constantly shifted towards serving the men with them[19]. These kinds of treatments keep on pushing the supposition that the worth of a woman is extensively founded on her strengths in fulfilling the requirements of men in her life, which further reinforces her role as a servant.

Women have to face terror and humiliation at the hands of men in authoritative positions in most of the movies, but they are expected to be obedient because they must still do their family duties. This is some reflection of a bigger cultural code that subordinates women in social as well as spiritual contexts.

Examples of Women's Power and Autonomy.

The Puranic women are depicted as subordinates, yet, exceptionally, there are a few instances when the female ones were depicted as being powerful and independent. These exemptions can most clearly be discussed in terms of the depictions of the powerful goddesses, such as Durga and Kali,

who are going directly against the discursive continuum of gendering by obtaining the roles of male gods [20].

Especially, Durga is a symbol of female strength and self-reliance. Durga in the Devi Bhagavata Purana is presented as a superhero female figure that carries out the killing of the demon Mahishasura, meaning that everything good is with evil power. She is an empowerment story in that she is no longer looking back to her place before a male deity but through her own strength, courage, and self-sufficiency. The victory of Durga over Mahishastra is a crucial tale that gives a comparison with docile female characters in the Puranas, since this woman can prevail in her destiny and gives people a successful look at fate without having to count on men.

On the same line, the other outstanding goddess is called Kali, who is the goddess of destruction and change. She is described as the element of nature, and anything she does is massive and mighty. The conventional passive images of women, who are mostly depicted trampling on divans and in shrines, have been reshaped as a woman who is both elevated and dreadful, showing the multidimensional theme of female divinity as far as Hindu mythology is concerned.

The role of Pocket Tissues in the Cosmic Order.

Other than the roles of wives, mothers, and warriors, there is also this presentation of the Puranas, wherein women were greatly regarded as the significant players in the cosmic order. They are shown as mighty organizations not only to support but also to devastate the universe, but in the vast majority of cases, they are used as auxiliaries by providing a second threat to their male counterparts [21]. Sati, in the story where she gives her life to a greater good, the honor of her husband, Shiva, is an illustration of the theme of women who are strongly tied to a male character in their religious ties. However, another compelling statement to her agency is the Self-immolation of Sati, but it only serves to screen her and avert the scenario with the intervention of a man.

This subordination and empowerment theme is a highly used one in the recurring motifs in the Puranas, and the women are depicted as being both in control and subjugated, depending on what story is being retold. This causes the Puranas not just to be a reflection but also an imposition on relationships that exist within the society towards women, and this gives a complex yet still contradictory view of what the ancient culture of the Indians may have believed about the gender roles.

Table 1: Representation of Women in the Puranas

Role	Frequency of Depiction	Examples	Description
Divine Consorts	High	Lakshmi, Saraswati	Women are portrayed as secondary to male deities, supporting roles.
Mothers and Wives	High	Sita, Kunti	Women are depicted primarily through their roles as mothers and wives.
Servants/Subordinates	Moderate	Draupadi, Satyawati	Women are depicted as serving or being subjugated to male figures.
Powerful Figures	Low	Durga, Kali	Women are shown as independent, powerful deities who transcend gender norms.

Table 2: Themes of Gender Hierarchy in Puranic Narratives

Theme	Frequency of Occurrence	Examples	Description
Female Submission	High	Sita, Draupadi	Women are expected to be subservient and fulfill familial roles.
Female Empowerment	Low	Durga, Kali	Instances where women take active roles of power and autonomy.
Subordinate Female Characters	High	Satyavati, Ahalya	Women are depicted in secondary roles, often as mothers or wives.
Male-Dependent Female Power	Moderate	Lakshmi, Saraswati	Female deities are portrayed with power, but always in relation to male figures.

6. DISCUSSION

This study reflects that there is a dual aspect to the story of women in the Puranas. On the one hand, women are explained as being the full-fledged portion of the cosmic order, which is a necessary component of the organization of the universe. Through such representations, on its part, is also frantic in the context of inflexible cultural codes worth the expectation of women, specifically where their male counterparts are concerned [22]. This kind of duality suggests that Hindu mythology was an expression of this kind of mythology concerning women gaining a divine status, although the role can be tendered to be dependent on the male. The cultural codes that were incorporated in these writings as a reflection of the norms of the ancient society are not only a signifier, but also influence the contemporary outlooks towards women, particularly in the family, social, religious, and societal settings. Such findings will be elaborated further to offer a reference and

Also, connect them with the literature and discuss the subsequent implications of how the representation of a female in such texts indicated the new gender trends.

Hindu Mythology Codes and Gendered Hierarchies Culture and Gendered Culture.

Indeed, Hindu mythology reflects a lot of women's roles that could be located in the Puranas as the traditional literature of the Hindu religion. As far as such texts allow space where women can reveal meaningful power and agency in their lives, as is the case with the goddesses Durga and Kali, a majority of the feminine characters will be portrayed within the restrictions of traditional gender roles [23]. These two games are all about women as wives, mothers, or daughters, where their worth has too often been measured by how they are related to male counterparts. Interests of such goddesses as Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Parvati are very linked with the activity of male

ones - Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva, whose actions determine the degree of female perception. Hubris. These women are not identified as being in the shadow of their male consorts, who impose their gender-based hierarchies, placing the men at the top of power and decision-making, despite living in their divine identity.

This propensity towards representation is shared with several other religious texts, which have been practiced in other cultures, in which women are shifted to the background despite their godlike status. This, as per the Hindu mythology, was a sign that women are able to possess the same power as the gods, though it is constantly in the form of support and supply to men, time and time again. Indicatively, Lakshmi, the creature of prosperity, is evidenced to be a mistress of Vishnu, and her ability and influence are normally revealed to have been through her association with Vishnu. Saraswati, the knowledge goddess, is also portrayed as having come to be identified with Brahma, and their duties are the traditional female morals of beauty, knowledge, and purity. Such association with male deities will ensure their roles will never outweigh, and they will always remain backgrounded in the self-ridden patriarchal structures of the texts.

The Cultural Frame and Women's Expectation Procession

Besides that, the paper also cites how the portrayal of women in the Puranas is highly influenced by cultural codes that determine how women should behave and their contributions in the Puranas. It is also such codes that do not just define the scene of the representations of women but still present expectations of the way women conduct themselves vis-à-vis the male individuals. Similar to women, the female characters of the Puranas tend to be idealized by the expression of devotion, loyalty, and selflessness traits personified by a woman, as in most patriarchal societies [24]. This was an example of the way a female should be expected to serve and nourish her male counterparts, since she was expected to do so due to her culture, and its culture as well did not believe women had their own powers or that they required independence.

The roles of wives and mothers are romanticized in stories about women in such writings as these, which were the most feminine ones. Such females as Sita, Kunti, and Draupadi are brought in as models of these virtues, and their worth is more or less equal to the relations with the husband or sons [25]. The cases presented to Rama by Sita, the sacrifice which was made by Kunti due to her sons, and loyalty which was granted to the Pandavas by Draupadi are all cases when we could find the picture of the ideal of women who could exist within these stories: she is self-sacrificing and loyal towards her own relatives. Such anticipations suggest the social concept that a woman possesses as his most significant duty to support her male counterpart, be it a wife, mother, or daughter.

Besides this, the cultural structure further emphasizes the chastity of women both physically and emotionally, with respect to the functions of women, entailing an appreciation of the texts that involve them. Their purity, chastity in particular, towards their relationship with the men is a theme that was

constantly repeated. The detail when Sita gets scalded with fire in order to show that she was innocent is also a significant pointer to the cross relations between the worth of a woman and her ability to possess being untainted and of serving her husband. These accounts reveal that the role of women in society has been excessive and reliant on the assistance of cultural codes that tend to give greater weight to emotional and moral purity than other aspects of the woman [26]. The framing places women at a disadvantaged situation since their value within the society will be subject to circumstances that can be either followed or disobeyed depending on their adherence to the gender roles and expectations.

The Ideas of Cosmos and Deities Women.

Nevertheless, as much as the gendered expectations are common in the Puranas, there is also a place in the moments where the women are established as the center of the universe and their divinity, wherein they offer the universe [27]. Goddesses like Durga, Kali, or Parvati are presented as self-governing and potent, whose energy over key aspects of nature is in control. In reference to an example, Durga is shown as a goddess of the warriors who fights the other world to attempt to establish the balance between the universe. Kali, in its turn, is the destruction, change, as an essential element of the cosmic cycle of the world. These goddesses do not lie under the male gods but are portrayed as independent, as dynamic (they have their own power).

However, even in these instances where women are being empowered, it is rather engulfed by a cultural frame. Despite being the powers of being divine, Durga and Kali also prefer to be presented in situations that uphold the conventional gender roles. Even though resorts to Durga are quite martial, the woman is still reflected as a wife and a mother, which is rather goddess Kali, an efficient destroyer, described rather often in the Shivan context [8]. This goes a long way to support the idea that even the toughest of women in these productions are somehow oriented in the relationship against men. In that sense, whereas there are remnants of strong and autonomous female images in the Puranas, the latter are always in contrast to the norms of the culture that attempts to limit and even override their authority within the patriarchal one.

Power over The Modern female imagery.

The puranic codes, which were incorporated into the cultural world of the present-day society, continue to influence the manner in which the society perceives women, particularly those in the family, religion, and society. These traditional narratives reinforce traditional gender ideals regarding the marginalization of women who are left trailing in line of duties that are of a behind-the-scenes character to men [29]. These cultural codes have been witnessed in modern society, where women are expected to behave in a particular manner towards their male counterparts within the family context. The mythical roles of wives and mothers as they are available in the Puranas still linger to create an impression on the contemporary guidelines of what women are expected to do. Being a lady, she

is often supposed to sacrifice individual interests to the family, and even, they are often evaluated in the context of their ability to serve their husbands and their children.

Puranic world of religion where women are symbolized as powerful individuals, yet subordinates may also help in reflecting on women concerning Hindu religious practices to date [30]. Not only can female deities be respected, but they can also have their roles somewhat reduced to a few operations, i.e., the power of fertility, prosperity, or wisdom, as opposed to the power of the God. This thwarts the degree of spiritual agency used by women in the worship of the contemporary world, whereby the heavenlords and priests are likely to be dominant in the religion.

Also, gender inequality in contemporary society could be further maintained by the cultural codes, according to the rules of which women are mothers and servants, along with their magical aspect. The reason is that these codes imply that women appear to be housewives, and the family is the central focus of their experiences, thus decreasing the opportunities for empowerment and becoming socially mobile [31]. Each time that the Puranas depict women as inferior to the role of male characters, they propagate the notion of contentment of women with other lower creations, not just in the house, but in the whole society in general.

Implications

Individually, the paper reveals that the conventional meaning of the Puranas that is being applied nowadays by feminism should be considered again [32]. Critical reading of such texts allows scholars and readers to subvert the accepted conventions of gender as well as suggest more equal conceptions of gendered content within Hindu mythology.

7. CONCLUSION

The paper ends up emphasizing the gendered essence of thinking in contemporary society that is continued through the Puranas. Despite bringing about the introduction of women in complicated forms in the Puranas, it could also bring back the old forms of social organization in gender hierarchies that prevailed and characterized social norms throughout the ages. The paper suggests the review of these ancient writings in the feminist approach, as it suggests a critical perspective on the writings, which can help provide input to the existing harm regarding gender equity. The scholars need to research more to know how overlaps of the gendering of caste and class exist in Puranas and other books on Hinduism, and how they can influence the contemporary Indian community.

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