

# Gender Inequalities in Animated World: A view of Indian cartoon series

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## ABSTRACT

The spoken and visual medium plays a fundamental part in the idealization of gender stereotypes in children. Animated movies or cartoon series being a significant way of communication, this medium has a crucial impact on a young child's psychology. Other than just a way of entertainment only for teenagers, it has an educational and socializing viewpoint. Cartoon series is one such form of visual communication that not only presents teenagers with characters showing behaviors and individual qualities that they take in and imitate, thereby popularizing the stereotypical outlook. Sexual orientation in the cartoon series is developed by the customs which are related to the roles anticipated to be executed by a girl or a boy. Gender difference in cartoons replicate female characters as fragile and bound to the family and daily household tasks and male as tough. The research inspects gender difference persistent animated world and to uncover its unfriendly effect. The study investigates two present-day Indian toon arrangements from the point of view of the character's physical appearance, male or female roles in problem-solving, social roles and manners.

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## 1. Introduction

Visual description as an essential mode of communication has been without fail spreading all over the country and is "the most persistent, persuasive and powerful". Children nowadays start watching TV at a very early phase of their life. They turn into acquisitive watchers as soon as they reach 2 to 4 years of age.

In fact, an enormous number of kids are watching television excessively and the cartoons that they watched have grown to become out to be an addiction. Youngsters distinguish directly with cartoon characters, such characters are surely the correct examples that empower good conduct among children. Cartoons play a critical role in influencing the surrounding children recognition about male and female. Kid's watch the conduct and activities of the cartoon characters and attempt to duplicate them. Being vulnerable to gender stereotypes that are depicted on TV, especially in animation cartoon series, they emphasize that acknowledged behavior appeared through media, in their lives. Moreover, "The impact of cartoon movies on children's gender development", the focus is on the advantages and disadvantages of animated cartoon series and the roles that are recognized as cartoons. The animated cartoon movies are not constrained to entertainment purposes but rather they include socializing aspects, gender stereotyping being one of them.

Additional, these cartoon characters in the movies can be both human, animal, and objects. Non-living and non-human characters appear human features, for instance, they can talk and walk just like individuals. These sorts of characters are important in the movies in view of their human-like features. In some cartoons series, lifeless creature characters play cliché female or male roles. In some animated cartoon movies, sex transformation takes put which frequently makes uneasiness or

nervousness among children. Youngsters have no feeling of comprehension; they don't understand that there exists a remarkable gap between reality and fantasy. Such sort of changes in animated cartoon series influences the psychology of a kid and its development. In this way, sex difference is obviously reflected through the characters roles. In cue with this, the research paper not just reveals an imbalance prevailing in the animated world but in addition looks for an answer to neutralize them.

## 2. TV and Its Percussions on Individual's Behavior

In TV the characters speak with each other and children frequently take up their method of communication which influences their behavior. They even try to copy their behavior and actions. A similar, report by Knorr, C. [2017] on "What media teach kids about gender" mentioned how youngsters begin to absorb exact personality of being strong or fearful. She also claims, 'strong and brave' superhero becomes aggressive and hostile and 'fearful and meek' princess becomes 'submissive and weak'.

## 3. Review of Literature

Numerous theories concerning the media's influence on individual psychology which talks about the impact of the media like cultivation and social learning theory. Theorist like Gerbner has featured that TV is "an essential aspect of a dynamic process" which restores beliefs and opinion" which turns out to be a powerful and influential common source for learning, to teach children about norms and values in society, and create a social reality". The media has the ability to influence the mind of the general public through its dual nature; which can be either positive or negative. It can also be used to create a culture and new trends and it is often referred to as "Mediated culture". Among different forms of the mass media, TV as a medium of visual and imagery representation of information which

uncovers social reality and plays an essential place in the socialization of children. Children are innocent who have little feeling of comprehension and TV, being a significant part of their life, disrupts the qualification among the real world and fiction influencing them to accept what is shown on TV is a social reality. Visual media holds an enduring effect on the mind of the general population as compared to verbal media. As stated by George Gerbner Television has a long-lasting effect on people.

#### 4. Cultivation Theory

Gerbner claims that the extra time each individual spend sitting in front of the TV, the more they believe in reality which is shown on the television. Individuals see it as the social reality uninformed of the way that it is only fictional. The visual representation of objects and characters is disseminated through television which influences the perception of the true world.

Gerbner recommends that TV viewing at an adolescent age can alter the social reality belief. He asserts that TV disguises those qualities which are as of now are the values which are already present in the culture.

'first-order' effect can be stated as observation, trust, and reality like overflowing of cruelty in the world.

'Second-order' effect can be stated as impacts state of mind towards judiciary, law, rules or orders.

#### 5. Social Learning Theory

Proposes that youngsters are inclined to quickly imitate and enlighten the behavioral pattern that they see in their ambiance and also the one they see on TV.

During the early phase of childhood, youngsters try to copy the model and act in the same ways and manners

*Chhota Bheem* is among one of the most admired cartoons in India and it is telecasted frequently on popular channels amongst kids. The main character in the story is a young boy ( Bheem ) whose day to day activities are shared as the story and knowledge. The location of this series is is an imaginary kingdom named Dholakpur which is shown as a country-sidewhere all these tales take place. *Bheem, Raju, Indumati, Chhota Mannu, Chutki, Jaggu, Dholu, Kalia and Bholu* are the lead characters. All the names given to the characters according to their personality themselves represent the gender inequality in the cartoon series. In all the cartoon series there is always a hero character who is shown as very powerful and is always ready to help his friends and his community from all sorts of problems.

*Bheem* is known for his tremendous strength and at the same time is a big-hearted and always willing to help out other and is recognized for his strength. Even the King of Dholakpur seeks suggestions for him. To justify the power, strength, and masculinity of the character Bheem the references used is from the epic Mahabharata whereas the leading female character is *Chutki* a seven years old stereotypical girl her name gives an impression of being very humble and petite but at the same

time she is a close acquaintance of the lead character Bheem. Her main role is to assist Bheem in all his adventures but to remain passive at the same time she has to look after all the household works in absence of her mother.

An additional observation in the cartoon series *Chhota Bheem* is that not even a single male characters have been assigned under any parental figures to implement a patriarchal command over them even when they are in their early teens. Neither Bheem, Kalia nor Dholu-Bholu are known to have parents. Raju's father who is a soldier is and he is all the time shown on wars or mission given by the Dholakpur King.

The other two characters Chutki and Indumati, are also given specific roles. Chutkimothers are shown to make laddoo that are fed to Bheem by Chutki (justifying the function of Annapurna) which is a primary resource of his strength. *Indumati* is shown as a princess of Dholakpur. She is symbolized as a fragile female. Both Chutki and Indumati are mostly wearing pink or lavender color skirts and blouses. Their hairs are long and tied as single or two side ponies. Both the female characters portray the characteristics that are asserted to be feminine. 'Similarly as' predictable with social perspectives of the sexual characteristics portrayals of ladies as sex items are generally youthful, thin beautiful, submissive, reliant, and frequently lacking ability to fight and clumsy" Wood JT (2014). Indumati as a princess represents royalty, fragile, well-spoken, at all times by her father's side, respectful and humble, however, she is referred as an entire exemplification of these characteristics. Princess Indumati might be a key part of the clash, but not at all a part of compromise whereas Chutki gives inputs to help in resolving the conflict but at the same time she can't get away from the denotation of 'Annapurna', she isn't as sensitive as Indumati. She is an essential part of Bheem's group and takes an interest in all the activities undertaken by the group. However, the sole responsibility of the conflict-resolution-lies on Bheem. Chutki is a subordinate of Bheem.

More importantly, whenever Bheem goes for activities which are related to the male's like archery or wrestling, Raju becomes a suitable companion whereas Chutki is side-lined. Chutki is a kind-hearted and generous and intelligent but never brave which is represented as an exclusive sphere of men.

#### 6. Research Methodology

A concise overview of the literature survey which is used to investigate a research related to gender discrepancy this topic has already received a wide consideration "in the field of linguists, socio-linguists, historians, women studies experts, and social research "On the other hand, in the field of gender inequity in Indian cartoon series, less research work has been conducted. Two cartoon series, *Chhota Bheem* and *Kumbh Karan* are taken as a case study for the analysis in this research paper Both these cartoon series chosen are shown up a couple of times in a day and are extremely popular among the youngsters. These characters are shown portrayed as heroes rather than as nonliving objects or animals, for example, computers, automobiles, robots, and other such objects. Furthermore, from the point of view of how it impacts observers and the development of the behavioral pattern of the

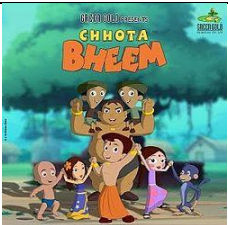

observer using social learning theory have been taken in account for the theoretical analysis.

It is very unique according to the Indian scenario. The youngster's text in general and animated has not been able to gain the attention of the researchers. Subsequently, this research does not proclaim to represent scenario according to Indian Mythology as we are only analyzing the cartoons

popular in the Hindi communication. The strategy applied is data interpretation where male and female characters in the particular cartoon series were analyzed using the research method that depends on estimating the amount for a representative sample testing in some collection of well-known work of art.

(Figures and Table).

Table: Projection of male and female proportion in Chhota Bheem and Kumbh Karan

Figure	Cartoon Series	No. of Males	No. of Females
	Chota Bheem	5	2
	Kumbh Karan	3	2

Figures: Male and Female ratio in the Cartoon Series Chhota Bheem and Kumbh Karan.

**7. Research Questions**

The research relies on the exploration of the following research questions and looks at developing an understanding of the following:

- How the social roles and behavior pattern are plays a significant role in promoting gender studies?
- Is gender inequality noticeable in cartoon series or not?
- How can communication play a key role in counterbalancing gender difference?
- How is physical appearance gendered?

**8. Gender Inequity**

As discussed here is the gender inequity is in the Animated World: A Reflection into Chhota Bheem and Kumbh Karan.

An overview of the children's publication in Hindi such as Champak, Nandan, and Parag which are extensively reputed. Furthermore, a study of their content and the conceptual framework discloses the deep-rooted gender typecast in Champak borrowed from the Panchatantra stories. Whereas, Nandan is full of tales about fairies and other characters from the land of magic. And Parag has secular stories, which on the other hand, are deep-rooted in the Indian social ethos. Obviously, because of their fundamental conceptualization, they cannot break out the gender bias inbuilt in the Indian ethos and culture which portrayals the representation of gender and re-inscription of gender typecast as endorsed by the society. But concerning the gender stereotyping innate within the mythology? The representation of female in these series

doesn't in any manner deviate from the standard norm. As stated by Signorelli, the constant exposure to such an ancient role in the animated world alters the insight of kids thereby, contribute within the formation of social reality.

The only cartoon series on Indian television is Chhota Bheem and Kumbh. They are used to analyze the representation of the female character and the current pattern of gender representation in children's animation.

Many researchers have put forward four different types of cartoon characters;

The hegemonic male, the submissive or the inadequate male, the fragile female, and the modern female.

The stereotypically strong males are typically the hero and are the conflict resolvers. Bheem, Kumbh, and Karan will simply be accepted as a fit in this group. A manly male is one who characteristic are mainly good appearance, physique, and modest outfit and hairdo. On the other hand, the deficient and meek male has a poor physical structure, opposing the hegemonic one who is physically powerful. The poor male is portrayed as feeble, fearsome, cowardly as a result the cause for the clash. Moreover, if they resolve any solution, they do it in a comical manner. Kalia, Kichak, Dholu, and Molu easily fit under this bracket. Similarly, the fragile and innocent females are same as derisory males. Their apparel is in such a the way that it restricts them from playacting any male task. Chutki, Indumati, and Tara easily fit the description of modern females as they are delicate and conversely yield in breaking down difficult matters than the fragile. Principally in cartoons, the dynamics between hero and anti-hero dominate the full

plot; delimiting the females to aspect roles or supporting ones. Girls in cartoons don't seem to be given equal platform as compared to men. Their roles stay passive in this method wherever they're usually pictured as typical heroines. Calvert, (1999) the fight focuses on the hero and villain who overshadow the role or involvement of the heroine. By the ending, the female lead is set free by the male lead and it gives you an idea that women are incompetent of defending themselves and their dependency upon man. The male protagonist wins over the bad character as in Chhota Bheem where Indumati and Chutki are often saved by Bheem.

Thus the study of the female characters in the children's animation in regards to the Indian movies/series discloses that all of these characters are drawn within the firm boundaries of the patriarchal setup.

A study of the characters of Indumati, Chutki, and Tara reveals that the ratio of the male to the female characters is 3:1 in Chhota Bheem and 2:1 in Kumbh and Karan. In each episode, it is observed that the number of male members is more than females. The average percentage of the male is 70% and female is 30% only. Thompson and Zerbinos in "Gender roles in animated cartoons: Has the picture changed in 20 years?" looked at that in all the cartoon series "the number of males among the leading role is more than females which is nearly one third while the numbers of other male characters are nearly one fifth still more than females". The uneven ratio of both the sexes in cartoons series indicates how women are given less significance and distinction as compared to men. Throughout the series, there is not even a single episode where female ratio exceeds male.

In all the episodes it is evidently visible that the existence of male characters at all times surpass the female character. Therefore, it is typically a boy's world that children sight in these cartoon series. Streicher's (1974) study is one of the original references used by the researcher to review the literature the representation of gender in children's television programming. She conducted a 9-week study in 1972 and reported that male characters outnumbered female characters in an overwhelming way across all genres of programming

## 9. Gender Bias

Gender bias is prevailing in each area of the social order. The part executed by each character is given accordingly to the approved societal standards which are well thought-out for both the genders. These gender-specific roles are in conviction by the society for the prompt recognition of social simplification. Gender roles are ordered according to the social belief about what the particular gender is ought to be. It can be defined as a stereotypical 'simplified and commonly held values about the fundamental personality of male and female'. It gets initiated with the course of action of socialization itself where discrimination is seen on the source of gender. Females are estimated as the guardian angel of home and male are liberated to do stuff suited according to their free determination. The sexual categorization is constantly noticed in the collection of plaything for both the sexes. The diverse handling of both the sexes by the close relatives is the original point from where this sexual characteristics difference begins and kids start to

recognize that they are apart. By the age of 24 months, a child identifies their gender and creates a world of male and female. Commenting upon the impact of such unrealistic representations on children, in "Children's insight of gender roles as depicted in Disney films" states that such "depiction of the perfect male and female figure as described and often due to this description of these characters young kids can recognize with their favorite characters, thereby affecting the way that these perceived values as regards to their potential roles in society". The family is the most important source from where gender biases start. The secondary starting place is school, friends, media; media being the most significant one. In many animated movies, one sex is shown as leading i.e. man is dominant and another as docile i.e. woman. Children absorb and incorporate these roles that show large inconsistency among distinction and the representation of male and female characters.

Furthermore, if feminine characters are drawn in for the work, they are ruled by males or are estimated as incoherent characters, as 'beauty without brains'. Such orthodox connotation supports in performing gender typecast. Males are publicized as strong, skillful, powerful, smart whereas women as flimsy, delicate, non-intellectual and subservient.

## 10. Parent's Responsibility

Parental control suggests a critical part in the enhancement of their child's psychological and physical development through their supervision, and the asset they give like toys, TV, computer games and so on.

The child finds out about the male influence over a female when they watch their father's positioned above their mother. A similar tradition of the authority of male gets approved while kids observe the equivalent in animated cartoon series. Many scenes of Chhota Bheem and Kumbh Karan, demonstrated that male characters constantly dominate the female concerning their sexual characteristics, uniqueness i.e. men are revealed as authoritative and physically powerful whereas women as feeble, delicate and they lack the capacity of critical thinking. This issue perseveres in many animated cartoon series. In view of the fact that children are further enticed to look at animated cartoon rather than pursuing any supplementary activity, guardians use animated cartoons as a device to keep their children occupied so that they are free to tend to other tasks. Therefore they persuade their children to see cartoons regularly.

Parents fall short to provide their children the necessary attention and guidance due to growing demands from their professional life. As a result, these circumstances consequence leads to a lack of communication between parent and children. Children who do not get the required consideration of their parents indulge more of their time in watching animated cartoons. This in general leads to fabricated perception about real life and often promotes gender stereotypes.

## 11. Conclusion

Numerous television programs related to social issues communicate about gender discrimination on a daily

basis in our society. A baby starts to the distinction between different sex at an early stage i.e. seven months.

Yet, this refinement in regards to their individual gender, gender-specific roles, and gender-related behavior starts to form by the time a child is seven years old. At this crucial age everything starting from the conduct of the parent's behavior, to the school atmosphere, to peers, to toys, to the socio-cultural set-up helps in molding the child's perception towards different gender, at the same time media being the most ground-breaking among all.

Previously, all the thing regarding the world and society was communicated by his/her parents to the kids but nowadays; the media also plays an outstanding role in the

socialization process of the current generation. Indeed reality/entertainment shows also endeavor gender biases where females are extravagance as an object of ridicule. However, if one digs into its origin cause, it gets initiated since early years, while the kid is in the developing period of his/her life. Gender bias shown in the kid's shows are disappointing in view of the fact that it is inescapable by children, which in fact are ignorant of the differentiation that is a present as a link between imagination and realism. Therefore, intent ought to be to create a counterbalance between gender-specific roles so that while a child is growing up as a person, in place of male or female, "establishing themselves as a symbol of an equal set of sentiment".

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