

Man's World in *Ladies Room*: Examining the Counter-Hegemonic Gender Representations in Indian Digital Streaming Content

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Digital media platforms like YouTube have allowed space for counter-hegemonic gender narratives in the Indian media landscape. A content analysis of two YouTube web-series (*Ladies Room* and *It's a Man's World*) was conducted to examine the construction of gender in these new-age narratives. The purpose of the investigation was to examine if the digital content in the YouTube web-series conforms to the traditionally mandated sex-role expectations about general attributes, activities, emotional expression, and speech patterns that are typically associated with men and women. Our findings illustrate that the *Ladies Room* reflects a post-feminist ideological stance through its plot, imagery, and visuals, emphasizing that girls' stories are important and can be funny. These characters represent the urban Indian women, where privileged women can resist the traditionally prescribed gender norms. On the other hand, *It's a Man's World*, challenges the hegemonic gender representation in mainstream media but ironically replicates some of the subservient feminine stereotypes as enacted from a man's perspective. Overall, the representation of the three primary characters and the packaging of the shows is suave, contemporary, and relatable for the young Indian audience. More importantly, these web-series resist and challenge the traditional gender narrative that dominates the mainstream Indian film and TV shows.

Keywords: YouTube content, Indian web series, gender representations, OTT-content, millennial viewers

India is a patriarchal culture that has traditionally prescribed gender norms for men and women. Feminist movements have been resisting the restrictive gender norms and advocating for equal rights for women. However, the battle is far from over. In a study conducted by the International Center for Research on Women, 1500 men aged 18-49 were interviewed about their attitudes towards stereotypical sex-roles in India (Nanda, Gautam, Verma, Kumar, & Brahme, 2013). These findings substantiate the existence of traditionally rooted beliefs as well as the gradually changing mindsets. For instance, about 40% of male participants constituted the profile of a 'rigidly masculine male' and believed that women and men are not equal.

On the other hand, roughly 25% of male participants believed that men and women are equal. The remaining 35% subscribed to a somewhat moderate position. These

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preferences for traditional sex roles also result in more instrumental hurdles for women in society. The World Economic Forum's 2015 report on measuring the gender gap in 145 countries provides useful insight into the status of women in India. The survey placed India in 108th position incorporating the gender differences of criteria such as economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

In addition to parents and educators, other socialization factors such as media representations of gender, also shape socially accepted scripts for sex roles. Media depictions reinforce the qualities that characterize an ideal Indian woman and denounce the attributes that challenge traditional norms of femininity in the Indian context. Existing media analyses contend that films, television, and other mainstream media platforms tend to reinforce the traditionally prescribed and stereotypical female sex roles in India. However, digital media have emerged as a new platform that allows for subversive narratives featuring non-traditional gender narratives in India. A content analysis of two YouTube web-series (*Ladies Room* and *It's a Man's World*) is proposed to examine how often these narratives depict male and female characters enacting sex roles consistent attributes and behaviors. Our findings have theoretical implications in recognizing a new avenue for analyses of gender narratives in the Indian context. Additionally, our findings have practical implications for examining the influence of these narratives in shaping young audiences' perceptions about gender and sex roles in the Indian context.

Literature Review

Culturally Situated Sex Roles

Existing literature contends that there is sociological as well as evolutionary evidence that can explain the sex-differences in general traits or attributes. For instance, Wood and Eagly's (2002) biosocial perspective contends that "biology, social structure, and the environment interact reciprocally to produce sex-typed roles" (p. 718). Research in psychology has documented that, children as young as five to eight years old, as well as young adults, are aware of the sex-stereotypes characteristics that define culturally situated sex roles (Davis, Williams, & Best, 1982). Regardless of the theoretical debate surrounding the development and perpetuation of sex-role specific social norms, these expectations are enacted in everyday life.

General Attributes

Research employing this perspective consistently finds that women tend to exhibit and value communion-oriented attributes that involve intimacy, disclosure and empathic understanding (Reis, 1998). On the other hand, this perspective argues that men value agency in relationships more than women because competitive actions in their social networks enable men to acquire higher status, capabilities, and access to resources (Geary, 2002). In a study conducted by Verma and colleagues (2004), 107 young men between the ages of 18-29 completed an open-ended questionnaire to describe their attitudes and beliefs regarding gender equity. Responses revealed that normative concepts of masculinity often included attributes such as physical strength, financial independence, physical aggression, and risk-taking abilities. Similarly, an examination of sex-trait stereotypes in

children and young adults in India, found that the male-associated attributes or adjectives included: adventurous, aggressive, independent, and realistic while the adjectives associated with female roles included affectionate, dependent, gentle, and complaining (Williamsa, Best, Haque, Pandey, & Verma, 1982). In a study by Nath (2000), in-depth interviews with working women in India revealed that working women often engage in code-switching by appearing to be healthy, aggressive and independent at work but having to switch the nurturing and gentle persona at home. The responses in this study also revealed the emotional and psychological burden of having to juggle between the two different sets of attributes.

Activities

Another important aspect of the stereotypical sex roles is the division of labor as well as the types of recreational activities that are seen as acceptable to men and women in India. The most basic division is the inescapable home-maker role associated with a good Indian woman, while the ideal Indian man is the primary breadwinner of the family. For instance, traditional sex roles consistent activities for women often focus on domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning the home, washing clothes, and making career choices that allow them to balance their familial roles as nurturers (e.g., Manohar & Kline, 2014; Nath, 2000). However, the number of women that are entering the workforce has increased, and a large section of urban women are refusing to be defined solely by their home and relational responsibilities (Budhwar, Saini, & Bhatnagar, 2005). Similarly, smoking, drinking, and recreational drug use, which have been typically associated as a male-activities in India, are not limited to the male sex anymore. Recent studies document that the number of women drinkers has increased exponentially over the past few years (Prasad, 2009).

Emotional Expression

Courage, bravery, and an inherent lack of emotions are often associated with Indian masculinity. For instance, Osella and Osella (2006) in their analysis of masculinity in South India, note that “the man who claims to stand alone, outside of the society, to bow only before God – is, of course, a highly masculine heroic figure, embodying many of the virtues commonly attributed to dominant males: autonomy, resolve, self-control, and high-mindedness” (p. 7). On the contrary, women are expected to be more expressive, with a particular emphasis on the expression of emotions that are consistent with the qualities of nurturing and providing love and affection. At the same time, the social expectations or display rules surrounding emotional expression mandate that crying or helplessness is also deemed appropriate primarily for the female sex.

Powerful and Powerless Speech

Speech styles embody the power hierarchies in society. A persuasive speech represents an assertive communication style that allows open expression of ideas and provides freedom to interrupt or control a conversation while a powerless speech style is characterized by language features such as hedges, intensifiers, hesitations, polite forms and deictic phrases in the talk (Hosman, 1978). The power hierarchies based on sex and gender influence the speaking styles in the day to day life. While powerful speech is associated with and expected from males, powerless speech is often associated with females.

Representation of Women in Popular Indian Media

The socio-economic dichotomies in India are apparent in the fact that a narrative that is perceived as regressive by the privileged Indian women represents agency and empowerment for the underprivileged women whose lives are untouched by feminist movements. For instance, a three-year panel study of 2700 Indian households in rural regions of India (Jensen & Oster, 2009) found that access to cable television was associated with a lower acceptance of patriarchal gender norms and an increase in women's autonomy. Jaggi (2011) analyzed Indian television soap-operas and observed that the narratives were highly gender-stereotypic. Despite some external changes in the overall portrayals, the imagery of women characters was traditional, and the clear feminine-oriented narrative was contextualized in familial and patriarchal norms (p. 144). Existing research about the portrayal of women in Hindi films emphasizes how female characters are often stereotyped and objectified. A recent qualitative analysis of Hindi films found that while mainstream Hindi films continued to feature female characters as being secondary and having little agency, a new genre of women-centered films showcases female characters that have greater agency and are central to film narratives. In an analysis of 'item songs' featured in mainstream Bollywood films, Manohar (2014) found that female performers depicted subservient sex-role behaviors and passive sexual behaviors while male performers depicted dominant sex-role behaviors and aggressive sexual behaviors. The results revealed that item songs portray women in subservient and men in dominant sex roles. Female performers are more likely to display passive sexual behaviors and are more likely to be filmed in an objectified manner as compared to male performers. An analysis of sexual assault portrayals in Hindi films found that a majority of the sexual assault victims portrayed traditional sex roles as compared to non-traditional or blended sex roles (Manohar & Kline, 2014).

Research also exists in the portrayal of women in Indian advertisements. In an analysis of Indian advertisements from the early 1990s, Munshi (1994) found that the seemingly 'modern' representations continued to confine the portrayal of women to relational roles such as a mother, wife, a daughter-in-law, and above all a homemaker. An updated analysis of advertisements from the year 2004 also found that females as compared to males, were more likely to be portrayed in relational roles (wife, mother, etc.), often seen in home settings, and less likely to be portrayed as employed, or occupying positions of authority (Das, 2011).

In examining these portrayals, it is useful to note that there is no consensus about what constitutes empowerment or agency for women. For instance, several feminists' critiques highlight the misnomer of equating modernity with autonomy in this context. Thapan's (2004) critical analysis of depictions of women in Indian women's magazine contends that the beauty and glamour industry has co-opted the images of the modern Indian women to sell and market beauty products.

Jensen and Oster (2009) studied the impact of television content on rural women's behaviors concerning perceptions about gender equality, particularly attitude towards women's social position. They surveyed 180 villages, where they conducted interviews with rural women. Over the three-year study, they found that television viewership percentage of women almost doubled and opinion on specific issues like the preference of a male child, domestic violence against women and spacing between pregnancies reflected a

positive change. The authors argued that the expansion of cable television influenced the perception of women's status in the household (pp. 1080-1081). The authors attribute this observed change to factors including greater access to information, hence increased awareness; and exposure to urban lifestyle and values. This study was important for identifying four crucial aspects of media depictions of gender in the Indian context. First, the media's portrayals of sex roles influence as well as challenge the audience's perception expectations of sex roles in everyday lives. Secondly, the Indian society has a stark rural-urban divide. Hence the messages targeted at both the audiences have to be created keeping their immediate contexts in mind. Positive and progressive gender portrayals can challenge old, conventional perspectives on sex roles. Media can play a crucial role in challenging the hegemonic representations of gender.

In addition to traditional media platforms such as television and films, India is one of the largest consumers of video-sharing platforms like YouTube. YouTube has emerged as a popular platform providing access to a wide variety of content. In an interview with Srinivasan (2016), Gautam Anand, the Director of Content and Partnership for Asia-Pacific YouTube explained the exponential growth of YouTube in India. He said, "We have over a billion users coming to the site every month. We have six billion hours of content being consumed every month. About 300 hours of content is uploaded on YouTube every minute. Concerning India, we have been witnessing a 70% growth for viewership year over year. Moreover, we are just getting started. As we get improved bandwidth, improved access, more affordable data plans we expect YouTube to see explosive growth".

Indian YouTube channels are riding this wave and producing new content to cater to the growing online audience in the country. Several Indian YouTube channels have garnered a substantial number of subscribers and have started multiple-episode web-series, with new episodes being released weekly or bi-weekly. A large section of the young urban audiences in India are appreciating the new content. As per the FICCI – EY Report on Indian M & E industry released in March 2018, the digital media in India is poised to grow at a CAGR of 25% between 2016 and 2020. The report attributes this growth to the availability of more global content, more niche content and more OTT-only content. The same report states that India will have the world's second largest video-viewing audience by 2020. The articulation of what it means in the social, cultural, economic and political contexts requires deeper academic engagement. However, the textual politics of content, the perception of audiences, and the production practices of content creators require a more in-depth engagement to understand how the OTT phenomenon is altering and redefining so much. This particular research study aims to investigate the textual politics of the content.

Research Question

To examine the themes explored in this new content, the following research question is proposed: Will the digital content in the YouTube web-series conform to the traditionally mandated gender differences based on (a) general attributes, (b) activities, (c) emotional expression, and (d) speech patterns?

Research Design

Sample

The sample for this study included ten episodes from two short web-series on YouTube: *The Ladies Room* (2016) and *It's a Man's World* (2015). The web-series included in the sample are a product of Y-films, which is an in-house start-up studio affiliated with Yash Raj Films, which is a successful movie production house in India. Y-Films has been positioned as a 'startup' that hopes to produce youth-oriented content that will challenge the traditional norms.

There were two lead characters in the *Ladies Room*. Therefore, each episode of this web-series was coded separately for each character, resulting in a final sample size of sixteen episodes. *It's a Man's World* is a four-episode long YouTube web-series produced by Y-film series in India that follows the journey of a man who believes the world is unfair to men and wants the men and women to interchange places. On the other hand, *Ladies Room* is described as "This is a story of two besties and the mental adventures they go through in six different loos over the six-episode series. It is a show about modern young 'girl bros' struggling to grow up even as they grow old. These girls are mad, bad and utterly unapologetic about it" (YouTube, 2016).

Unit of Analysis

The units of analysis were lead characters that appeared in each episode of the web-series. While coding, each episode was divided into 1-minute sections to code for the presence and frequency with which each coding category was observed to be present or missing in the depictions. Below is a complete list of the coding categories and a list of all possible codes that were observed and coded under each of the categories.

Coding Categories

Sex-role Associated Masculine and Feminine Attributes: General attributes associated with masculine and feminine sex-roles were coded in this category. The general attributes associated with masculine sex-roles included physical strength, athleticism, financial independence, humor, intelligence, risk-taking, bravery, physical aggression, and competition. On the other hand, attributes associated with feminine sex-roles included nurturing behavior, gracefulness, gentleness, kindness, receptivity, submission, patience, sharing, and collaboration.

Sex-role Associated Masculine and Feminine Activities: This coding category examined the activities that the characters engaged in based on the traditional sex-role associations about activities that are deemed appropriate for men and women. Masculine activities included working/having a professional life, engaging in sports, drinking, smoking, and driving a vehicle. On the other hand, feminine activities included cooking, washing dishes, grocery shopping, or being involved in other domestic activities.

Sex-role Associated Masculine and Feminine Emotional Expression: Emotions associated with masculine and feminine sex-roles were coded under this category. Masculine emotional expression codes included being happy, excited, affectionate, sad, disappointed, confused, shocked, experiencing shame, guilt, and physical pain.

Powerful and Powerless Speech: The use of powerful and powerless speech styles was coded under this category. Language features that were coded as powerful style included talking confidently, asserting one's opinions, interrupting others, question other's ideas, using a high volume, and displaying an aggressive manner of speech. On the other hand, less powerful speech codes included hedging, apologizing, hesitating while expressing opinions, allowing others to talk more, accepting the other person's ideas, using a low volume, and displaying a gentle manner of speech.

The frequency of codes for all behaviors under each category was aggregated to form a composite variable that represented frequencies of each coding category. Both the researchers coded three episodes to establish inter-coder reliability (Cohen's kappa > .80 for all five categories). The coding sheet is enclosed as Appendix I.

Results

Three sets of paired sample t-tests were run to compare means of feminine and masculine attributes for each of the three characters (*Khanna, Dingo, and Kiran*). Khanna and Dingo were the biologically female characters that are the protagonists in *Ladies Room*, while Kiran is the biologically male character and is the protagonist in *It's a Man's World*.

Four paired-sample t-tests were conducted to compare how often each of the three characters depicted masculine versus feminine attributes depicted as engaging in masculine versus feminine sex-role.

Khanna: Results revealed that Khanna's character displayed more masculine attributes ($M=5.67, SD=2.41$) than feminine attributes ($M=2.17, SD=1.92$), $t(5)=4.12, p=0.009$, engaged in more masculine activities ($M=2.33, SD=1.50$) than feminine activities ($M=0.34, SD=0.17$), $t(5)=3.79, p=0.013$, and used more powerful speech ($M=13.32, SD=7.81$) than less powerful speech ($M=3.49, SD=3.62$), $t(5)=3.09, p=0.027$. However, there was no difference in the frequency with which Khanna demonstrated traditionally masculine and feminine emotions, $t(5)=0.17, p=.85$.

Dingo: Results revealed that there was no difference in the frequencies with which Dingo's characters displayed masculine and feminine activities $t(5)=-0.34, p=0.74$, or expression of masculine versus feminine emotions $t(5)=-2.42, p=0.06$, or display of powerful versus powerless speech, $t(5)=2.106, p=.089$. Results revealed that Dingo engaged in more masculine activities ($M=3.33, SD=2.94$) than feminine activities ($M=0.37, SD=0.40$), $t(5)= 2.774, p=0.04$.

Kiran: Paired sample t-tests were also conducted to compare how often Kiran's character engaged in masculine and feminine behaviors. Results revealed that there was no difference in the frequencies of masculine and feminine attributes, and engagement in masculine and feminine activities. Kiran's character engaged in the expression of more feminine emotions ($M=9.25, SD=1.70$) as compared to masculine emotions ($M=2.5, SD= 3.69$), $t(3)= -4.521, p=0.02$. Kiran's character used less powerful speech ($M=14, SD=2$), than powerful speech, ($M= 3.75, SD= 6.23$), $t(3)= -3.573, p=0.04$.

Discussion

Overall, both the *Ladies Room* and *It's a Man's World* are multifaceted texts. They integrate hegemonic and counter-hegemonic elements concerning the concept of gender. *Ladies Room* is defined by a bold portrayal of both its protagonists and reflects a post-feminist ideological stance through its plot, imagery, and visuals. That, girls' stories are important, and can be rib-tickling funny is positioned very strongly. Humor and the bond of friendship drive its plot, which is indeed a solid departure from women's portrayals in relational roles in most mainstream media content, otherwise. Both women protagonists in the *Ladies Room* do not adhere to the sex-role attributes that describe femininity in the conventional sense. There is some adherence to the hegemonic feminine attributes, as observed in the content analysis. However, this cannot be viewed as an independent occurrence, but in the context of the story and plot points; which are very unconventional and contemporary. This Indian web-series incorporates themes like smoking, drinking, and pre-marital sex, which is a counter-hegemonic portrayal of the kind of activities women are portrayed to indulge in on Indian media. Khanna and Dingo stand in opposition to the normative codes of power and gendered hierarchies that define Indian social ethos and the Indian media representations. A critical factor that is very apparent while watching this series is that the two women are not confined to any relational identities that label them as a wife/daughter/mother/mother-in-law. For example, Khanna gets pregnant in one of the episodes and quickly moves to the decision of aborting the child, which is in stark contrast to the narratives about abortion and pregnancy we see in mainstream entertainment. She is reasonably unemotional about this experience, which depicts the reality for several urban women who have chosen or wish to choose a life without kids. The premium placed on motherhood as being the thing that completed women is being challenged and overthrown by this narrative.

What comes across as extremely liberating is how the alternative portrayal of both these characters creates empathy for them rather than the framing them as deviant or irresponsible, as has always been constructed by fictional content on Indian media. The popularity of this series and the critical acclaim that it has garnered reinforce the fact that the Indian society is transitioning and the youth not only find the alternative content enjoyable and palatable but also meaningful and relatable in light of their everyday lived realities, especially in the urban context.

The content analysis of *It's a Man's World* brings forth an interesting description. As mentioned earlier in the paper, the narrative of this show flips the male and female characters. Consequently, the male protagonist portrays a higher incidence of feminine attributes. This series was also a massive success in India. It has social change as its agenda at its core. However, it communicates the message with aplomb. High production value, popular actors and the funding from a leading production house make it an enjoyable package. It's a simple idea but the treatment is extremely powerful, and the elements of reality and fiction are deftly interwoven in the narrative. By positioning a man as the central character and by making him perform the feminine stereotype to all possible extremes, the narrative incorporates and challenges the constructs of power and resistance, at the same time. The fact that Kiran, the male protagonist in *It's a Man's World*, plays the girl-next-door stereotype challenges the hegemonic gender representation in mainstream media is one part; but the fact that feminine stereotypes constructed by the media are incredibly subservient is the irony that this web-series articulates very strongly.

Both these series have social consciousness at their core. However, they do not sermonize. The representation of the three primary characters and the packaging of content is suave, contemporary, relatable and robust at the same time. Therefore, the digital media

platform has the potential to voice the counter-hegemonic narratives of women that represent the realities of real urban women in India. This is a refreshing change that could influence the discourse surrounding gender in the young urban population in India. However, to recognize the urban-rural dichotomy in India, it is important to note some practical limitations of the new media content. One crucial factor that undermines the potential impact of this non-stereotypical content is the relatively limited accessibility and reaches of this content. While YouTube is fast spreading its reach in India, it is important to note that 75% of India online population includes individuals between the ages of 15-35 years. Thus, counter-hegemonic scripts can resist or question patriarchal gender norms in limited segments of society.

Similarly, the digital content remains very urban-centric, in terms of the stories that get depicted or the use of the English language. The content represents the free female voices in India while excluding the realities of rural Indian women. The narratives depict and speak to the urban sections of the Indian society, where women have financial freedom, ability to make life decisions, access to education, and are not bound by strict familial roles. Thus, while the digital medium has emerged as a strong platform to give voice to counter-hegemonic female voices, its potential has not been fully explored in order to reach the rural, non-English speaking, Indians whose lives may be untouched by the technological developments as well as the ideological movements about gender equity.

However, the avenues for future research in this area are promising. The Indian digital media landscape is witnessing exponential growth with more and more niche content being created for various segments of the Indian audiences. Many new web-series such as *Permanent Room-mates*, *Bisht Please*, *Girl in the City*, *Bang Baja Baaraat*, *Life Sahi Hai*, etc. rely on Hindi as the primary language and explore more relatable themes surrounding relationships, conflict, politics, and the struggles of day-to-day life in India. Future studies can begin to examine the themes and gender ideologies represented in the new content while comparing it to existing mainstream discourses about gender and sexuality. In addition to that, interactive affordances are an essential feature of the digital media content that allows the audience to engage with and immediately react to the content. The examination and analysis of these comments could lead to added insight into people's perceptions about these new-age female narratives. The next part of this study is already underway and is beginning to capture the millennial audience's reception of the reconfigured representations of gender and sexuality on streaming platforms. The tone of responses is celebratory on the one hand and accusatory on the other. One of the critical questions being raised is if there is reverse stereotyping and if the content at some level is bordering on overcompensation. However, this research study does not address that investigation and discussion. What this study has endeavored to articulate is an academic reflection on the changing narratives on gender in Indian fictional content on streaming platforms.

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Appendix

Coding Sheet for YouTube Series

Name of the Series: *Ladies Room* and *It's a Man's World*

Episode number: (LR1, LR2, ... MW1, MW2..)

The character being coded: Khanna, Dingo and Kiran

Performance of masculine attributes

| Attribute description | Frequencies of depictions |
|---|---------------------------|
| <i>Physical Strength</i> : hitting or moving something, providing evidence that the character had a strong physical effect on the person or object (England, Descartes, Collier-Meek, 2011) | |
| <i>Athleticism</i> : a specific jump or kick, or running which would require some athleticism. (England, Descartes, Collier-Meek, 2011) | |
| <i>Causing Fear</i> : causing someone to respond with fear, which is defined as uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger. This includes portraying violence and aggression, intimidation, or unintentionally inspiring fear as well. | |
| <i>Brave</i> : Courageous, daring, intrepid. Bravery often involved a rescue or leadership in the face of danger. Alternatively, taking risks. | |
| <i>Unemotional</i> : Repression of emotion, indifference to pleasure or pain. A character was unemotional in response to something that might seem to warrant an emotional response, such as a death. | |
| <i>Assertiveness</i> : Insistence upon a right or claim, the action of declaring or positively stating. Assertiveness included polite assertiveness with a hint of aggression. Assertiveness was a robust and direct assertion of a position or idea. | |
| <i>Aggression</i> : Display of physical or psychological aggression (e.g., use of abusive language, use of force, an act of threatening another person) | |
| <i>Sexuality</i> : Expression of sexual desires, engages in a discussion about sexual experiences, sexual freedom to engage with multiple partners, unemotional views about sexual encounters, agrees to/engages in sexual activities without marriage. | |
| Engaging in Drinking/Smoking/Drugs | |
| <i>Financial Freedom and Employment</i> : Character earn money by working and has the freedom to make financial decisions. | |
| A character does not engage in domestic chores such as cleaning the house, cooking, etc. | |

Performance of feminine attributes

| Attribute description | Frequencies of description |
|---|----------------------------|
| <i>Physically weak</i> —not being able to succeed in something that takes physical strength. It was often accompanied by needing help or else failing. | |
| <i>Submissive</i> —yielding to power or authority, humble and ready obedience. This trait was usually in response to another character’s assertiveness. | |
| <i>Affectionate</i> —having warm regard or love for a person or animal, fond, loving. (e.g., physical display of love such as a hug, a kiss). | |
| <i>Nurturing</i> —to care for and encourage the growth or development of, to foster. | |
| <i>Fearful</i> —an instance of emotion, a particular apprehension of some future evil, a state of alarm or dread. | |
| <i>Victim</i> —subjected to mental or physical abuse/ill-treatment. | |
| <i>Experiences of Shame and Guilt</i> —affected with shame, the painful emotion arising from the consciousness of dishonoring and guilt. | |
| <i>Sexuality is repressed</i> —Characters does not talk about sex, does not have sexual freedom, does not/can not have sex without marriage, views sex as being tied to emotional intimacy. | |
| Drinking/Smoking/Drugs | |
| <i>Lack of Financial freedom</i> — Character is either employed by has not financial freedom or is unemployed. | |
| Character engaged in domestic chores such as cleaning the house, cooking, etc. | |

Relational role depictions

| Relational role depiction | Frequency |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Mother | |
| Father | |
| Sister | |
| Brother | |
| Friend | |
| Wife | |
| Husband | |
| Son-in-law | |
| Daughter-in-law | |
| Other | |

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