

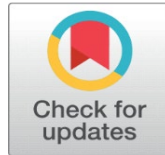
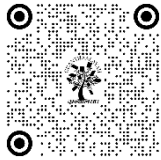
REPRESENTATION OF MAN IN MAGAHI FOLK TALES: A STUDY OF MALE STEREOTYPING IN 'CHHATRI GHUGHULIA'

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ABSTRACT

Folk Tales are oral narratives that carry the social and cultural treasure of a society, and help in entertainment, learning and the preservation of cultural values and beliefs. Compared to studies done on women in the Magahi Folk Tales, there is a dearth of research on men in these folk tales. By critically engaging in studying the different attributes given to men in the Magahi folk tales and how the stereotyping leads to societal expectations, we understand the socio-cultural framework of masculinity in the Magahi society. The Gender traits given by John J. Macionis in his book Sociology, help us to analyse the Magahi folk tale- Chhatrī Ghughulīa in Sheela Verma's book- Magahi Folklore and Folk Tales. The recurring themes of these narratives in Magahi society and the words used in the tales to describe the characters and their actions, make us understand how the masculine identity is formed in the Magahi Society. This research paper is an attempt to broaden the horizon of studies done on Magahi Folk Tales and put forward an analysis of a Magahi Folk Tales from the perspective of Masculinity Studies. This study can be significant in understanding the complexity of gender identity and contribute in the new discourses on masculinity in the present times.

1. INTRODUCTION

Folktales, as an integral component of social and cultural wealth, are tools that have helped civilisations to disseminate across all societies to entertain, instruct, guide and safeguard cultural heritage. Folktales organise apparently random events and communicate cultural beliefs, as it helps people to socialise with each other. This, further, positively impacts individuals by fostering self-awareness, confidence, knowledge, and a fresh perspective on life. Folktales may effectively connect the new generation to the old via socialisation. This broadens thoughts and beliefs, and helps individuals grasp their societal duties and obligations. Personal sensitivity increases towards others. Thus, folktales serve an essential function, among other cultural traditions, in fostering unity and facilitating interchange and comprehension among individuals.

The reflection of societies' belief systems, customs and social structure through folktales is propagated from one generation to another. Along with this, viewpoints and prejudices of collective consciousness are often seriously practised in society after it is proliferated in the society. When we talk about issues related to gender, it's a common understanding that generations get socialised with the stereotyping and gender-based/biased narratives that they imbibe.

The gender portrayal in the folk narratives, especially, the representation of men in these tales has garnered attention has garnered attention in recent times. Folk tales may include stereotypes, which are simplistic impressions of groups or people. Stereotypes shape the attitudes of men and women and their positions in society. These narratives often portray men in ways that mirror social standards and power dynamics. Folk narratives in South Asia, especially in the Magahi-speaking regions of Bihar and Jharkhand, promote gender norms that delineate masculinity. Numerous folk tales depict males as heroic characters, wise elders, or adversaries, so endorsing masculine traits such as power, wisdom, and morality. Understanding the impact of these representations on social expectations requires a grasp of their cultural and psychological implications. Despite the influence of folklore on gender roles, there is less understanding of Magahi male stereotypes. The representations of males in these tales are seldom studied in academic contexts. This research investigates masculine stereotypes in Magahi folk tales and their reflection and reinforcement of regional masculinity norms.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study involves a qualitative research approach. The selected Magahi Folk Tale will be analysed through the content analysis method, wherein the theoretical framework here consists of a coding frame of gender themes based on Traditional Gender Stereotypes as found in Macionis (2001).

The coding frame of the masculine Traits given there is as follows:

Dominant	Independent	Achievement
Strong	Brave	Active
Competitive	Insensitive	Rational
Assertive	Analytical	Ambitious
Sexually Aggressive	Intelligent	

3. REPRESENTATION OF MEN AND THEIR STEREOTYPES IN FOLK TALES

Societal beliefs regarding the suitable roles for men and women are referred to as gender role attitudes, gender ideology (Davis and Greenstein, 2009), or gender stereotypes (Attanapola, 2004; Berridge et al., 2009; Bosak et al., 2018; Charlesworth and Banaji, 2021; De Silva and Priyashantha, 2014; Eagly et al., 2020; Lopez-Zafra and Garcia-Retamero, 2021). Their representation in folktales is of great significance as it helps to shape the societal mindset. The representation of different genders and their stereotyping condition the children as they inculcate the same values and further, perform them in the real life.

Gender studies emphasise masculinity, yet sociological research on it is new in early India's socio-historical environment. Masculinity is frequently contrasted with femininity. Both definitions assume heterosexuality or 'natural sexual orientation'. Oxford Learners Dictionary defines 'Manliness' as the qualities and physical features that are admired or expected in a man. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines 'man' as 'pertaining to the sex that produces children or performs the fecundating role,' while 'masculine' denotes 'virile, strong, and powerful.' Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary defines 'manliness' as courage, dignity, nobility, and other masculine traits, not childlikeness or effeminateness.

Although masculinity has no strict definition, it is associated with virile sexuality, fertility, power in both public and domestic spheres, temper and physical strength, especially in violent actions like warfare, and confrontation. The idea of 'failed masculinity' or 'emasculatation' emphasises that men are masculine. The male characters in folktales are usually seen to have more physical strength as compared to women. Potency is always a big thing for the male characters. They are usually seen to be going to war or always ready for some bodily action.

Social constructivist conceptions of masculinities acknowledge that individuals and their circumstances shape gender. Feminist anthropologist Rita L. Segato (2003) states that males use various types of violence to sustain their masculine roles and identities during different phases of their life. Moreover, the boundary between gender and sex is blurred. Gender is a social behaviour, not a trait. This rhetoric fosters the idea that males see their bodies as machines that can be manipulated. Indeed, it emphasises the Cartesian duality between mind and body, causing men to feel disconnected from their physical sensations (Moynihan).

According to Hoyt et al. (2009), males are seen to be powerful, independent, rational, and decisive, while women are perceived to demonstrate caring for others, warmth, helpfulness, and nurturing. The features that are typical of men and women are referred to as agentic (masculine) character traits. Male gender stereotypes are clearly understood differently than female ones. Males are likewise affected by meek, submissive, and pathetic female characters because they lack strong female role models. They must read stories with female protagonists as well as male protagonists who lead them to marriage. Female protagonists may help men accept women in leadership roles they might otherwise find unacceptable. These perspectives are formed from the observations that people make on the behaviour of men and women in a variety of social settings (Priyashantha et al., 2021b). The folk tales give an insight into the social settings and construction within the socio-cultural framework. Thus, studying the representation of men and their stereotypes helps to understand the gender construction and performance in society, especially from the perspective of males.

4. SUMMARY OF THE MAGAHI FOLK TALE- CHHATRI GHUGHULIA

Here's a summarised overview of the folk tale 'Chhatri Ghughulia' (Verma, 2008, pp. 160–163):

King Randpal Singh of Jhajhampur was brilliant and brave. He married at Ghatampur and had seven Ghatam brothers-in-law. The Ghatams were prominent businesspeople. Daily loading included 700 bulls at their site

Raja Randpal Singh was furious when he saw these bulls carrying Ghatam products across his domain. He ordered all merchants to unload and lighten their shipments. News reached the Ghatams. They wanted retribution. Colourful Holi arrived. Ghatams and Gangu Barber sent king Rampal an invitation. The significance was clear to Randpal Singh's pregnant wife Yashoda. Randpal Singh went to her brothers' house despite her cries and attempts to stop him. He had an iron suit and 56 daggers on his back. Atop his man-eating haikal horse, he headed to Ghatampur.

The evil Ghatams attempted several methods to murder him, but he always worshipped Devi and was rescued. He was deceived into drinking and slain by the despicable Ghatams. They also dispatched a midwife to terminate their pregnant sister Yashoda. The midwife felt sorry for Yashoda. She saved their sister Yashoda by showing Ghatams a bucket of scarlet betel spittle and convincing them the kid was aborted. For life, the unhappy queen went to King Brijman who invited her to marry. 'I'm your sister's daughter-in-law,' said the queen. Your marriage proposal to me is shameful. He ordered her to be hanged in a wild bush in rage. Rich merchant Hemad Modi devised a solution to rescue the queen from the king's torment. He told the monarch, "Your Highness, my sister fought with her sister-in-law and left home." Why did you order her hanging? Why was she punished? The king was confused. Let queen Yashoda leave with Hemad Modi in command. She lived with Modi as his sister, and his business grew significantly. Yashoda had a God-incarnate son. He spoke immediately after birth. He prevented his midwife from cutting his naval chord. He replied, 'Devi will accomplish it,' and the great goddess did. Kasipur experts formed his horoscope and called him Chhatri Ghughulia. They told Modi, Your nephew is a Kshatriya. He will get fame. He will marry his daughter and charge Raja Brijman 52 lakh rupees. At twelve, Chhatri Ghughulia bathed in the Ganges and set his dhoti on a high rock. Mother Sharada appeared as an elderly lady at this time. She grabbed his dhoti. The youngster requested the dhoti, but she refused. I can simply provide a few puja grains, he remarked graciously. If you return my dhoti, I'll offer that. After waiting, the Devi replied, I cannot eat your meal. Your paternal uncles, the Ghatams, slaughtered your father and did not bury him, contaminating you. Boy became crimson with rage. He discovered the whole thing via Devi. He avenged everyone with Devi's help. Visiting Ghatampur as a saint, he sat near Chaura Enara. He told a girl fetching water, 'The water of this well smells, for your miserable monarch murdered his sister's spouse by foul play and did not complete the burial rituals.' The brothers were frightened when the girl told the Ghatams everything. They begged the travelling saint how to atone for their guilt.

The saint replied, "Feed 80 Brahmins and give away your brother-in-law's haikal horse and iron outfit when you killed them as alms."

After receiving their alms, Chhatri Ghughulia donned the iron garb, attached fifty-six daggers to his belt, and rode the flesh-eating haikal horse. He presented himself to the Ghatams with his sword. He sought permission from Devi at her shrine to avenge the Ghatams. She saw him and said, "First ask Brijman to pay fifty-two lakh rupees to your uncle Hemad Modi and marry his daughter." He visited Brijman's court. King Brijman was furious when he heard his request. He informed his messenger that a mosquito had entered the court. Grind him into paste. Chhatri Ghughulia murdered Brijman's soldiers and the messenger. Haikal horse devoured 14,000 soldiers at one instant. One staffer, Puranmal Divan, escaped. Ghughulia won and went to the king. The monarch was terrified and gave him 52 lakh rupees. Sukhanti, his daughter, married Chhatri. He left with his wife and Hemad Modi after marriage. King Brijman played. His letter to Delhi revealed Chhatri Ghughulia's barat (wedding procession) was travelling and begged assistance snatching fifty-two lakh rupees from Hemad Modi, cutting off his head, and turning queen Sukhanti a Muslim.

Puranmal Divan's troops reached the barat. He encircled the queen's scarlet palanquin. Her tears began. The Mother Goddess Devi immediately awakened Ghughulia and took him there. The Devi blessed him and his heavenly valiant horse to slaughter all his adversaries. Again, only Puranmal Divan escaped. Soon after, Chhatri Ghughulia slept on his gold bed. Puranmal cut off his head in the chamber. Queen Sukhanti mourned her spouse at Dehuli Jungle and decorated the pyre. Devi Sharada tested her virginity as an elderly lady. She died. Devi told Queen Yashoda, "Your son was killed in Dehuli Jungle." Grab him and bring him to my temple. Yashoda took her son's corpse to the shrine and prayed, "Oh mother Goddess!" Please revive my son. I shall worship you with Basmati rice, sandalwood, and a black goat sacrifice. Devi draped the gallant guy with flowers. He woke up, sat down, and said, "Mother, order me to cut off the heads of all the uncles and bring them here?" Devi said, "Do it later?" After some time, the barber invited Chhatri Ghughulia to a Chhathi in Ghatampur six days after childbirth. Despite Yashoda's objections, he bravely travelled to Ghatampur. His uncles threw him several pranks, but his younger aunt revealed their schemes. Smartly, he came home to happiness. Queen Sukhanti bathed in Sera Pokbra. All seven Ghatam brothers fished in this pond. They flirted with the queen. Sudhu Mahra hurried to tell the king. He approached the pond. Five uncles' heads were cut off. He just cut off his youngest uncle's nose because he owed his youngest aunt. He then returned to Hemad Modi's home and lived happily. Queen Yashoda sacrificed and prayed to satisfy Devi. Devi Sharada laid her hands on Chhatari Ghughulia's head to grant him a long and wealthy life.

5. ANALYSIS OF MALE CHARACTERS IN 'CHHATRI GHUGHULIA'

The title of the tale as the name of the male protagonist 'Chhatri Ghughulia' in itself is symbolic of the importance of the character in the narrative. As per the understanding in the society and visible in many Magahi Folk Tales, the father of a strong male character has to be of the same kind. The folk tale starts with the background of Randpal Singh the father of Chhatri Ghughulia, where he has been described as 'brilliant, glorious and gallant'. The dominance of men in the narrative is also visible as King Randpal has seven brothers-in-law. This also depicts that the number of men in the family is synonymous to the strength of the family. The male characters have to be achievers and hard workers; here, these seven 'Ghatams' are big businessmen. Anger and the idea of revenge in a person are considered to be manly traits which make a person active and competitive and show that the individual wishes to dominate the other person. Thus, on one hand Randpal gets infuriated when he sees the bulls carrying Ghatam's goods in his kingdom, and when he throws all the carriers out of the kingdom, Ghatams plan to take revenge on him.

One of the traits in men that makes them seem independent, strong, dominant, competitive and active is their decision to challenge the adversity. Despite the fact that Randpal's wife, Yashoda, could sense that something might go wrong and she advises Randpal not to go. Randpal's manliness doesn't allow him to listen to his wife. A husband might be considered as effeminate when he listens to his wife, as the society expects a kingly figure to challenge and fight. He goes to the Ghatams, prepared with his iron-outfit and fifty-six daggers; riding on the Haikal horse.

The brothers on the other hand after a great deal of effort get successful in killing King Randpal. Thereafter, they also plan to kill the still-to-be-born child of their pregnant sister. This is sheer insensitivity from their end, but it looks justifiable in the tale as men are usually supposed to be cold-hearted and should not be soft as women. Hence, they make

efforts to abort the child which would become a threat for them later when he grows up. The sexual aggressive King Brijman, who Yashoda relates as his 'sister's daughter-in-law' proposes marriage to her. Later, when she rejects this proposal; she is sentenced to death by Brijman. Hemad Modi, a rich merchant, saves her from this and also allows her to live with him as his sister. The horoscope of Yashoda's son Chhatra Ghughulia describes him as god's incarnation and as someone who would bring a big name to the family. There are always great expectations from boys since their childhood. This assertive approach towards them, makes them bound to the expectations of the family and society at large.

The traits of anger and revenge-readiness of patriarchal figures like Randpan and Ghatams, are also visible in Chhatra as he resolves to take revenge on Ghatams, after hearing the whole story of his childhood from Mother Sharda. He takes the guise of a saint and very cleverly makes Ghatams worried by him, displaying his intelligence and ambition. Even Chhatra's outfit and daggers, just like his father. Hence, it is not just the values which are passed from one generation to another. He manages to kill King Brijman and marries his daughter- Sukhanti, again depicting insensitivity and sexual aggression. People try to take down Chhatra. Purnamal Divan, along with his army, tries his best but fails. Later, he succeeds in killing Chhatra with deceit. On the pleas of Yashoda, Ma Sharda grants Chhatra another life. Thereafter, Chhatra also kills five of his uncles and hurts the rest. We can observe here that the protagonist is given attributes of a hero, who is a warrior, valiant, violent and can not be killed permanently.

6. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Gender denotes the personal characteristics and societal roles that individuals in a community associate with being female or male. Gender is a facet of social organisation that influences interpersonal interactions and self-perception (Macionis, 2012). Furthermore, gender encompasses hierarchy, differentiating men and women in terms of power, income, and other resources. Men in Chhatra Ghughulia occupy a superior position wherein they are bound to function as per their position. The position renders societal expectations, which further leads to a situation where the characters are bound to steer their lives in fulfilling those expectations. Gender roles and stereotypes often also become a burden. The son is supposed to avenge the atrocities on the father. The same happens in this narrative as well. Chhatra Ghughulia takes revenge of his father's death. He also ensures that being the man of the family, he restores dignity and gives justice to his mother Yashoda, by killing Ghatams and King Brijman. This approach comes from the patriarchal setup of society.

Marilyn French (1985) argues, patriarchy drives men to seek control, not only of women but also of themselves and their world. Here, all the decisions are being taken by the man of the family. The men seem to be playing the game of power and control against themselves and with women, there is sexual control as well, that is seen.

When individuals of a certain gender exhibit behaviours more characteristic of alternative social roles than their counterparts, such behaviours are considered common features associated with that gender (Eagly et al., 2020; Eagly and Karau, 2002). The gender traits for men as given by Macionis is based on the similar lines and hence, helps to analyse a text better through the gendered lens.

There are certain words in the folk tale which represent the stereotypes of men. The following table associates those words with the masculine traits given by John J. Macionis.

Word	Traits
Glorious	Achievement, Recognition, Brilliant
Gallant	Brave, Assertive, Competitive
Brilliant	Intelligent, Analytical, Strong
Angry	Aggressive, Assertive, Competitive
Wretched	Insensitive, Rational (lack of emotion)
Deceitful	Competitive, Analytical, Insensitive
God's Incarnation	Dominant, Strong, Saint, Intelligent
Proposing Marriage to a Relative	Assertive, Competitive, Traditional
Lot of Recognition	Achievement, Strong, Brilliant
Saint	Rational, Intelligent, Wise (indirectly related)

The content analysis shows that the perception of male characters are very much visible through the words used to represent them. This reinforces the stereotypes. When we talk about Magahi Folk Tales. It is not just this tale which has such characters. We have tales like A Wrestler Prince, Lorikayan, Resama and others which have similar male characters and their representations.

7. CONCLUSION

Folk tales as a form of oral traditions are the carriers of social and cultural beliefs and norms. It helps in shaping the society. Most of the studies that have been done on the lines of gender in the area of folk tales; Magahi Folk Literature, in particular, has been done with a feminist perspective. The study of the representation of men and their stereotypes in the Magahi Folk Tale- Chhatri Ghughulia revealed the deeply ingrained stereotypes in the Magahi society. The archetypes of men as visible in Chhatri Ghughulia is common in most of the Magahi folk tales. This is also a practice among other folks, too. The narrative, here, shows men being ruthless to show strength and competition; being insensitive to be brave and decisive and impulsive to be intelligent and rational. The understanding that the present study has given, further paves the way for more work in Magahi Folk Literature as well as the Folk Literature of other regions.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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