

“Mythic Power and Modern Heroism: A Comparative Study of Gender Constructs in Hindu Mythology and the Marvel Cinematic Universe”

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Abstract:

This study looks at how Hindu mythology and Marvel sci-fi movies show gender roles, focusing on how stories from the digital age deal with empowerment, autonomy, and traditional gender roles. By comparing female figures like Goddess Durga and Sita Mata to Marvel's Black Widow and Captain Marvel and male icons like Lord Rama and Lord Krishna to Marvel's Tony Stark and Thor, we can see how digital interpretations have changed how people think about gender today. The change follows efforts for gender equality that stress diversity and intersectionality. These traditional roles are still around, but mythological adaptations and Marvel movies are starting to show more complicated versions of them. So, the study looks at how mythical characters from the past and modern superhero stories come together to promote more equal gender representation in stories told today. This intersection shows how portrayals of gender have changed throughout time, moving away from old stereotypes to show people who are more complicated and have greater control over their lives. Goddess Durga and Sita Mata are both respected for their strength and morality. They are like Black Widow and Captain Marvel, who show how to be strong and independent even when things are hard. In the same way, Tony Stark and Thor's complex personalities, which include dealing with their own flaws and society's expectations, are similar to Lord Rama and Lord Krishna's heroic traits. The way these characters are portrayed in the digital age shows that society is starting to recognize and value other kinds of power and leadership that go beyond gender. The study's purpose is to find out how current media can tell a story that includes everyone and resonates with modern viewers, which will help people accept different gender roles. This study shows how important stories are for setting cultural standards and encouraging gender equality.

Keywords: Gender roles, Hindu mythology, Marvel superheroes, Female empowerment, Digital adaptations, Cultural Representation

Introduction

The way that gender roles are shown in mythology and modern media has been of interest to academics for a long time since it reveals cultural beliefs and social norms. The study looks at how gender norms are shown and changed in two different but connected areas: Hindu mythology and Marvel science fiction movies. Its goal is to find out how these stories have changed in the digital age and how they deal with themes of empowerment, agency, and breaking down traditional gender roles. Hindu mythology has been a source of cultural identity and religious practice for a long time since it has so many characters and stories. Goddesses like Durga and Sita Mata show a wide range of traits and skills, making them multifaceted symbols of femininity and strength. Goddess Durga is a warrior goddess who exemplifies fiery independence and martial prowess. Sita Mata, on the other hand, is loved

for her unwavering devotion and moral integrity. She is a model of piety and strength. In the traditional Hindu setting, these goddesses show different sides of women's strength and power. The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), on the other hand, has become a huge part of modern popular culture. Black Widow and Captain Marvel are examples of strong women that go against how women are usually shown in the media. Black Widow is a strong, independent woman with a tangled past and spying skills. Captain Marvel is a powerful woman with cosmic powers. Both of these characters show what it means to be a strong, independent woman today. These heroines, like the famous ones before them, have to deal with a lot of problems and expectations, which changes what it means to be a heroine in today's world. Digital media has had a big effect on how these stories are told now. Modern tales on Hindu mythology and the MCU's big story are more accessible and powerful than ever before. They reach people all over the world through movies, TV series, and the internet. This digital growth has made it possible to show gender roles in more complicated ways, which is a sign of society's ongoing progress toward greater equality and variety. Because of this, people are using both old myths and new superhero stories more and more to examine and change what it means to be a man or a woman. The multiverse in Marvel sci-fi is a huge, complicated web of different worlds, each with its own set of characters and realities. This strategy lets people see well-known characters and stories in different ways, which makes the Marvel cinematic world even more complicated. Exploring these multiverse places makes you think about how amazing life is and how many possibilities there are outside of our planet. Hindu mythology has a lot of different characters, like gods, goddesses, heroes, and heroines, that show different aspects of gender roles. The stories of Goddess Durga, Sita Mata, Lord Rama, and Lord Krishna have been told for hundreds of years. Each one has deep, symbolic meaning that shapes Indian culture's values and standards. These mythical beings represent not only numerous facets of gender and masculinity, but also the complexities of human experience and societal norms. In the digital age, many different versions of classic old stories have come out, modifying and reinterpreting traditional gender roles to fit with modern times. The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is a modern cultural phenomenon that has had a big effect on popular culture around the world. Black Widow, Captain Marvel, Iron Man, and Thor are well-known not just for their heroic deeds but also for how they show gender in complicated ways. The MCU uses big stories and complex character development to address themes of strength, independence, and breaking down outdated gender stereotypes. These modern stories, which are influenced by feminist movements and changes in society, reflect and challenge current ideas about gender. The digital revolution has changed the way stories are told, read, and understood in a big way. Streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ have made it easier for people to acquire content, which has allowed a wide range of people to enjoy these stories on a large scale. Also, social media and online groups change how characters are portrayed and how stories are told, making storytelling more participatory and democratic. Jenkins (2006) talks on how important participatory culture is in the digital age. He says that it lets people connect with and change the stories of their favorite franchises, making the storytelling environment more open and dynamic.

In the world of Hindu mythology, the digital age has brought back interest in old stories, which have been adapted into anything from TV dramas to animated movies to internet series. These new versions often try to connect old myths with modern beliefs by showing gender roles in more complicated ways. For instance, the TV show *Siya Ke Ram* tells Sita Mata's story in a new way that focuses on her strength and independence. Digital versions of the Mahabharata also highlight how smart and emotional characters like Lord Krishna are,

shattering old gender stereotypes and showing them in a way that appeals to modern sensibilities.

Marvel's perspective about how women and men are shown has also changed Lord Rama a lot, thanks to bigger social developments and feminist movements. The portrayal of female superheroes has moved past tokenism to include major parts that are deep and complicated. Black Widow and Captain Marvel are two characters that show this change. They are emblems of strength and determination. The MCU has changed a lot because of movements like #MeToo, which have called for more realistic and robust portrayals of women. Banet-Weiser (2018) says that the cultural shift brought on by #MeToo has made women in media want more sophisticated and important roles. This is a sign of a bigger social movement for gender equality. Male superheroes in the MCU also go through a lot of character development, which often includes themes of redemption, responsibility, and personal growth. Tony Stark goes from being a selfish millionaire to a selfless hero, and Thor goes from being a rude warrior to a wise leader. Both of these changes show the importance of humility and sacrifice. These stories fit in with bigger movements for social justice that focus on themes of forgiveness and growth, which help to create more complex ideas of what it means to be a man. Diversity and intersectionality are becoming more and more significant in stories these days. Marvel movies and interpretations of Hindu mythology both try to show multiple identities and deal with issues like race, sexuality, and intersectionality. Crenshaw (1989) stresses the importance of intersectionality by saying that it's important to know how different forms of discrimination overlap in order to address all forms of social inequality. This openness is a result of intersectional feminism, which calls for cultural stories to include a wide range of experiences and points of view.

How gender roles are shown in Hindu mythology and Marvel movies has a big effect on how people think about gender today. These stories are tools for questioning and changing traditional ideas about gender, which leads to more equal and complex representations. Studies suggest that how the media portrays things can change how people think, and that positive and diversified portrayals can help make cultural norms more equitable and welcoming. Gill (2007) says that how the media shows things is very important for shaping societal ideas about gender since it shows and shapes what is seen as normal and acceptable. This article shows how old myths and new superhero stories are similar by comparing how female characters are portrayed in Hindu mythology and Marvel movies. This crossroads gets people thinking and changes how the following generation thinks about gender.

We look at how new digital versions of things change how people think about gender roles. It looks at whether the change in story fits with bigger movements for gender equality, stressing the importance of diversity and intersectionality. Even if traditional gender roles are still there, Hindu mythological adaptations and Marvel movies are both moving toward more equitable and complex portrayals. This transformation not only shows how society has changed, but it also shows how digital media has a big impact on shaping cultural stories and ideas. This mix of old myths and new superhero stories looks at how women are portrayed in Hindu mythology and Marvel movies, as well as how these stories develop and inspire the next generation's ideas on gender. It also shows how narrative, both old and new, may help make sure that gender is represented fairly in today's media.

Hindu Mythology's Gender Roles

There are many stories in Hindu mythology that give complicated pictures of gender roles. In this case, female gods like Goddess Durga and Sita Mata are very important since they each represent distinct parts of being a woman. The "Devi Mahatmya" part of the Markandeya Purana tells the story of Goddess Durga, a strong warrior goddess who defeats the buffalo monster Mahishasura. Her narrative is a metaphor of virtue winning over evil, and it shows her as a strong and independent person. As Kinsley (1988) says,

Goddess Durga is very different from the usual duties of women in Hindu society, which are more domestic and submissive (p. 43).

This image has been changed in many modern forms of media, such as books and TV shows, to highlight her role as a symbol of women's power.

In the "Lord Rama Yana," Sita Mata, on the other hand, is the perfect example of loyalty, purity, and strength. Her story, especially her trial by fire (Agnipariksha), shows how society expects women to act. Goldman (2004) says,

"Sita Mata's character is bound by the dharma of pativrata, which reflects the ideal virtues of a devoted wife. However, her trials and tribulations have been reinterpreted in modern contexts to show her inner strength and resilience" (p. 27).

These feminist reinterpretations go against traditional ideas by showing Sita Mata not simply as a helpless victim, but as a strong person.

Lord Rama and Lord Krishna are two male figures who also have a big impact on how gender roles are defined. The "Lord Rama Yana" shows Lord Rama as the perfect ruler and husband, embodying the qualities of duty, morality, and fairness. His unshakable dedication to dharma is an example of how men should act in Indian society. Pollock (1986) says,

"Lord Rama's commitment to dharma, even at great personal cost, shows the ideal of self-sacrifice and duty that defines ideal masculinity in the Hindu context" (p. 112).

In the Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna is a complex character who embodies heavenly love, strategic reasoning, and philosophical wisdom. His lighthearted but deep exchanges, especially with the Gopis and his advice to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, give us a new way to think about what it is to be a man. According to Dimock (1989),

"Lord Krishna's life and teachings bridge the gap between divine and human, offering a model of masculine behavior that is both tender and powerful, playful yet deeply moral" (p. 54).

Digital media has changed a lot in the last several years when it comes to how these mythological figures are shown. These characters have been reimaged in TV shows, movies, and web series to fit with modern ideas about gender. For example, "Siya Ke Ram" and other shows give a more complex picture of Sita Mata, focusing on her strength and independence.

Adaptations of the Mahabharata have also shown how smart and emotionally deep characters like Lord Krishna are, which goes against traditional ideas about gender.

How Marvel Sci-Fi Movies Show Gender Roles

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) has had a big impact on modern popular culture, especially when it comes to how it shows gender roles.

Black Widow and Captain Marvel are two Marvel female heroes who have become icons of female empowerment and have broken down old prejudices. Black Widow, who first appeared in "Tales of Suspense" in 1964, goes from being a Soviet spy to a major member of the Avengers. Her stories focus on themes of atonement and self-determination. As Waggoner (2014) points out,

"Black Widow's character arc from a morally ambiguous spy to a hero of conviction reflects the complexities and evolving roles of women in modern narratives" (p. 87).

Captain Marvel first appeared as Ms. Marvel in Marvel Super-Heroes (1968). She then changed into a strong character who represents strength and empowerment. According to Stuller (2010),

"Carol Danver's journey to becoming Captain Marvel is a metaphor for the larger feminist movement, showing a woman who overcomes personal and systemic obstacles to claim her identity and power" (p. 102).

Iron Man and Thor, two male superheroes, also go through a lot of character growth. Iron Man (Tony Stark) goes from being a selfish billionaire to a selfless hero, which shows themes of responsibility and personal growth. According to Dittmer (2013),

Tony Stark's change is a story of redemption that shows how a flawed person may become a symbol of heroism through self-awareness and sacrifice (p. 61).

Thor's transformation from a cocky warrior to a wise and modest leader shows the importance of humility and giving up things. Johnson (2012) also says,

Thor's character arc is like the hero's journey archetype, where the hero learns to be humble and gains insight through hardships (p. 45).

These character arcs have been heavily affected by feminist movements and developments in society. For example, the #MeToo movement has changed how female superheroes are shown, making them more complex and powerful. According to Banet-Weiser (2018),

The #MeToo movement has changed the way women are portrayed in movies and TV shows, pushing for more complicated and realistic characters who have actual power (p. 76).

In the same way, bigger movements for social justice have affected stories about male superheroes by adding elements of atonement and personal growth.

Digital Media and How It Shows Gender

Digital media has been very important in changing these stories, making mythological and superhero stories easier to find and more powerful. Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ are just a few of the platforms that have made these stories more popular. Social media also has an impact on how characters are portrayed and how stories are told. Jenkins (2006) says,

Digital media has made participatory culture possible, which lets fans interact with and change the stories of their favorite franchises. This makes storytelling more democratic (p. 89).

In current stories, intersectionality and diversity are becoming more important. Both the mythological adaptations and the Marvel movies try to show a wide range of identities, including concerns of race, sexuality, and other intersections. Crenshaw (1989) talks about how important intersectionality is by saying

To fix all the social problems that cause unfairness, it's important to know how different types of discrimination overlap (p. 139).

This openness is a result of intersectional feminism, which calls for cultural narratives to include a wide range of experiences and points of view.

The way gender roles are shown in Hindu mythology and Marvel Sci-fi has a big effect on how people think about gender today. These stories are ways to question and change traditional ideas about gender, which leads to more fair and complex representations. Research shows that how the media portrays people affects how people think about them. Positive and diverse portrayals can change social norms toward more equality and inclusion. Gill (2007) says that how the media portrays gender has a big effect on how people think about it, showing both what is normal and acceptable and what is not.

Hindu mythology and the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) both look at and question gender roles, which leads to complicated portrayals of people that go against established norms. In Hindu mythology, Goddess Durga is a major figure who represents shakti, or divine feminine strength. The death of the buffalo demon Mahishasura is her most renowned act. It shows how strong she is physically and is also a symbol of the victory of good over evil. This painting goes against the usual submissive roles that women are given. It shows Goddess Durga as a guardian and warrior who can be both compassionate and fierce. The narrative of Goddess Durga shows that femininity includes a wide spectrum of traits, from caring to fierce protectiveness. Black Widow (Natasha Romanoff) and Captain Marvel (Carol Danvers) are two characters in the Marvel Cinematic Universe who violate established gender roles.

Black Widow's character arc shows how she goes from being an assassin with a shady past to being a hero who stands up for herself. Her remarks perfectly capture this change,

I have red in my books. "I want to get rid of it,"

The Avengers (2012)

Her words here show how much she wants to be free and redeem herself. They also show how she is both a fighter and a lady who wants to define herself beyond what she has done in the past. Her portrayal goes against the norm for female characters in action movies, who are either overly sexualized or only play supporting roles.

Captain Marvel is a modern example of how to think about women's strength. Captain Marvel is one of the MCU's strongest superheroes, and her journey is one of self-discovery and empowerment. Her words,

"I'm not going to fight your war; I'm going to end it."

shows that she is independent and won't let other people or things control her. This fits with the well-known narrative of Goddess Durga, which shows her as a powerful force against chaos and injustice, not just a combatant. Captain Marvel's character development is a good example of the larger feminist movement in modern culture, which wants female characters to be seen as independent people in their own right instead of only how they interact with male characters.

In the same manner, male characters in mythological literature and current cinema are shown in ways that make people question traditional ideas of masculinity. Lord Rama and Lord Krishna are famous in Hindu mythology not only for their brave deeds but also for their kindness and knowledge. Lord Krishna's joyful and compassionate connections with the Gopis (cowherd women) reveal a caring and nurturing side of being a man. This description is very different from the rigid and serious ways that masculine heroes are usually shown. In the MCU, characters like Tony Stark (Iron Man) and Thor change a lot, which makes them more relatable and stretches the boundaries of what it means to be a manly hero. Tony Stark goes from being a selfish playboy to a hero ready to make the ultimate sacrifice. His famous line, "I am Iron Man," shows that he has accepted who he is and what he has to do.

This study shows how ancient myths and modern superhero stories are similar by looking at how men and women are portrayed in Hindu mythology and Marvel sci-fi. This junction shapes and motivates how young people think about gender. In the end, these changing stories help to create a more balanced view of gender in today's media, which reflects and drives changes in society. The changing way that gender roles are shown in both old myths and new stories shows that people are more aware of how complicated human identity is and how important it is to have varied representations. These stories, whether they are old or new, are good ways to challenge stereotypes and strive for a more open-minded view on gender. They stress how cultural stories and social values change over time and that power, compassion, and agency are not limited to one gender. As society changes, so do the characters in stories. They are now shown in a more balanced and nuanced way for both men and women.

Conclusion

Comparing the roles of men and women in Hindu mythology with Marvel sci-fi movies shows how important digital media is in shaping cultural stories and points of view. There are still traditional gender roles, but there is a strong push for more equal and complex portrayals. This change fits in with larger efforts to promote gender equality, which stress the importance of diversity and intersectionality in the story. Myths from the past and superhero stories from

today are changing, which gives us important information about how society is changing and encourages more fair portrayals of gender in modern media. In Hindu mythology, female gods like Goddess Durga and Sita Mata have represented many different aspects of being a woman, from being a warrior to being loyal. However, newer versions in the digital age have changed these roles to focus on empowerment and agency, which is in line with how people think about gender today. Also, gods like Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, who stand for values of justice and strategic intelligence, have been reinterpreted to show a more complex view of masculinity that fits with modern cultural norms. Over the years, feminist movements and changes in culture have impacted how Lord Rama is shown in Marvel comics. Black Widow and Captain Marvel are two female superheroes that show strength and empowerment by breaking stereotypes and taking on more complex and important tasks. Iron Man and Thor are two male superheroes who have also changed a lot as characters, with themes of redemption, responsibility, and personal growth. These stories fit in with larger social justice movements that call for more equal and inclusive ways of showing gender. Digital media has had a big impact on modifying these stories, making myths and superhero stories easier to find and more powerful. Internet platforms have made these stories more accessible to a larger audience, who can then interact with and change them. Social media and networking make a culture of participation that supports storytelling that is more open and dynamic.

In modern stories, intersectionality and diversity are very important. Both Hindu mythological adaptations and Marvel blockbusters try to show different identities.

These stories help us learn more about gender and promote equality by talking about issues of race, sexuality, and other intersections. How gender roles are shown in Hindu mythology and Marvel movies has a big effect on how people think about gender today. Media portrayals that are positive and different have a big effect on how people think about gender. They challenge traditional ideas and favor more equal and complex portrayals. These changing plots excite viewers and change how the next generation sees gender, making the media a more fair and balanced place.

In the end, looking at how gender roles are portrayed in Hindu mythology and Marvel science fiction movies shows how digital media may change traditional stories. There are still traditional gender roles, but there is a big trend toward more nuanced and equal portrayals. This is because to changes in culture and efforts to promote gender equality. Myths from the past and superhero stories from today are changing. They give us important information about how society is changing and encourage more fair representations of gender in today's media. This change shows how important it is to include different points of view and stories in the media, which makes the media more fair and welcoming.

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