

Metanarratives of Indian neo-femininity in Netflix: A semiotic analysis of Delhi Crime and Bhaag Beanie Bhaag

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ABSTRACT

The rapidly evolving Over the Top (OTT) media has unsettled the conventional entertainment paradigms and revolutionized the content consumption dynamics. Demand-driven OTT content favorably characterizes Indian women as determined to shatter the glass ceiling. However, web series are not one-stop-all solutions since representations are fertile habitats for nuanced exploration of female characters, arguing prescription of interpretation or analysis. The academic inquiry through semiotic analysis of the Netflix releases, *Delhi Crime* (2019) and *Bhaag Beanie Bhaag* (2020), appropriates neo-feminine traits to examine the shifting dynamics of women's representations and the visual medium's ecosystem. *Delhi Crime*, a popular crime drama that carefully busted the gender trope of the mythical damsel and the male knight-rescuer, and *Bhaag Beanie Bhaag*, a less popular comedy series based on the humorous socio-cultural climate of self-introspection and discovery as a life statement, are analyzed utilizing the framework of Five Factor Model's big five qualities. A study of 34 semi-structured personal interviews correlated the big five qualities to new femininity, interpreting webisodes as intertextual manifestations of contemporary women. The findings provide significant insights into neo-feminine manifestations and contribute to the wider discourse on women's studies in the digital era thus disentangling screen webs that integrate onscreen Indian women into every-day lives.

KEYWORDS

OTT, web series, Netflix, neo-feminine traits, Five Factor Model, Indian women.

1. Introduction

India, being one of the youngest nations of the world with an average age of 29, the hunger for entertainment is colossal. Media being the most pervasive technological intervention in everyday existence, Indian market is far from attaining saturation when it comes to entertainment. Web series, mostly short form video programming created for online and digital consumption, is a popular entertainment platform that has a considerable number of dedicated followers, mainly from the young demographic and is hailed as a refreshing change from the drudgery of small screens and big screens. Kickstarting as interludes between TV and cinema (BIGFlix, launched by Reliance Entertainment in 2008, foraying into nexGTV, ZEE and Sony Liv in 2013, Disney+Hotstar, Amazon Prime and Netflix in 2016), web series are prepared to make India bag the position of the world's sixth largest entertainment fanatic in less than half a decade triggering the nation's total M&E revenue to snowball at a brisk scale of 10.1% (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). Almost charting its way to a revolution, the number of OTT media platforms has leapt off to almost 40 as compared to 02 back in 2012. The OTT distribution landscape is governed by its own platform players albeit social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube still constituting a major chunk of video viewership. They continue to proliferate and consume a lion's share because they simply transport us to where television and feature film featuring multiplexes won't.

a) The OTT Boom- The Entertainment Surrogate:

In recent times, we have witnessed a boom in webisodes production. Urbanization, Westernization and Sanskritization at its root, access to digital devices, improved infrastructure has catalyzed its consistent growth. Giants like Netflix and Amazon have started investing heavily in regional, national and global content libraries gauged by creative autonomy, economic affordability, and twofold convenience. For years, viewers have set their schedules around their favorite TV shows or have been tied by movie show slots but with web series and their pause and play options they experience the liberty to watch as and when one pleases with self-regulated intermissions. Moreover, the monthly fee for subscribing to an OTT platform, exploring variegated untouched topics, is about quarter the price for a movie ticket at a complex or monthly DTH subscriptions of wholesome TV channel packages. While this is at play from the audience per se, another reason for fueling its popularity is the creative freedom to appropriate and materialize the vision of creators instead of trimmings to fit into the format of household moral standards (Bharathula). Thus, online streaming platforms, through high-tech alterations changed the consuming landscape by impacting how audiences select and interpret television through the rhetoric of control (Jenner), audience autonomy (Napoli), and audience driven quality content (Seetharam; Wayne). The reconceptualization of the older phenomenon is evident in 'cord cutting' (Becz, *The New Chapter of Quality TV Conquers the Big Screen*); (Tryon, *TV Got Better : Netflix 's Original Programming Strategies and Binge Viewing*) (the consumer trend of dropping cable TV to adopt streaming platform subscriptions) like new practices in the television audience research apart from platforms encouraging 'enigma webbing' (Jenner) and recommendation algorithm driven 'entrance flow' (Perks) are considerable factors reorganizing benchmarks of viewership. Heavy on radical, relatable, and mature content rather than the cliched melodrama, OTT podiums satiate the thirst of the present milieu for streaming a mixed bag of issues that mirror our lifestyles and problems with blatant honesty. Trespassing censorship decrees, as discussed by ("*Censor Board on OTT Will Be Disaster*" - *Daily Excelsior*), necessitating a smaller budget, and appealing to the audience's primal instincts, web series are dismantling the conventional entertainment industry and shifting the fulcrum of research interests quite rigorously (Srivastav and Rai).

b) The Pandemic and OTT Evolution from Niche to Mass based content in Netflix - Gaining Traction

OTT has been ascribed an imperative 'cultural on-screen space occupier' status that now resides in closer proximity to the target audience. Interestingly, this cemented status was further bolstered as OTTs strived to provide respite to the harrowing experiences during the biological pandemonium, the COVID 19 pandemic. With digital being the new normal (*Digital Is the New "normal" When It Comes to Marketing: Report*), it proved a boon for OTT revenue propelling some conspicuous profits at the expense of mainstream cinema and a complete overhaul of ever evolving dynamics of the sector. Netflix, among the online streaming channels, presides over a pioneering position of other platforms (Becz; Tryon) with its intended demographic: urban, affluent youth.

With internet streaming, an emerging technique in media popular among younger generations, there is a large possibility for audience research in changing media in India (Evans; Pisharody) indicating a relevance-surge of media studies in the Indian context. Video on demands had curated a clutter breaking 'new at home' entertainment medium corresponding to the ascending appetite of its Indian audience with some glocalised products like "Kota Factory", "Jamtara", "Mimi", "The White Tiger" that have been winged with direct releases on these platforms (D. Morley). Since audience research is historically western in pedagogy, such products seek to de-westernize audience scholarship and make it suited for regional microcosms with the audience integrating Netflix into their everyday contexts while craving for its subsequent unpacking of quality content, handy consumption and the much-awaited strategizing of distribution and content customization models post lockdown and the COVID crisis. (Tryon Chuck).

c) The Subject and Subjectivity of Neo-Feminine Representations:

Global streaming platforms with its transnational content flow amidst its glocalization on-the-go, a gamut of genre choices, personalization and flexibility of viewership have provided seamless tailored experiences to viewers who in turn find a huge library of content resonating closer to reality. Women issues form an integral part so much so that women are represented as change-makers or models of women empowerment converting streaming into 'streaming'. However, the cultural relativism and subjective singularity of the women's experiences should be underscored and retained as a major critical prism. Hence, emerges the need to exoticize women rather than make them fit into one category aping phallogocentrism (DERRIDA ;Özkan and Hardt) through the emerging heterogenous traits that characterize a new woman.

Due to shifting socioeconomic circumstances and women's roles, femininity is altering in India where for a variety of politico-cultural reasons, women have long been center-staged, scrutinized, fortifying subordination and compliance to androcentric norms. Bakhtinian "Heteroglossia" (Bakhtin) also proposed in the same vein that of the text being "a site of struggle, carnival, and subversion. Though online cinematic texts do not topple the dominant or conventional, their presence alongside indicates that the dominant is neither overpowering nor unchallenged. The lead female characters in the discussed web series are attributed with each-of-a-kind agency that attempts to make them champion their individual bodies, clothing-coded appearance, careers, and sexuality on the pillars of emotional, individuality and professional traits depicted in their reel lives.

d) Traits in Webisodes Taking a Semiotic Turn-

Michael Foucault has focused on power as essential to the human predicament and discourse as the arena for this fight (Schneck). He believed discourse alone could create and legitimize uneven power relations by naturalizing difference and subjection and instituting corrective mechanisms. Through signals and their meaning production, media, too, has mediated symbol circulation with communication technology, resulting in web series. Representations in web series are one of the manifestations where the privileged in society retain influence over the marginalized. They only take the semiotic turn when trying to disentangle opposing but related forces.

Web series can be likened to Barthes' potential turns or writerly texts (Hans et al.) where the viewer participates in unending signification games. British materialism's focus on ideology formation in representation has allowed critics to study representations as an ideological system. However, Baudrillard's "simulacra" (Baudrillard) differs from Platonian "eikon", a good duplicate of the original but deceptive model (Patton; *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*). Web series examine portrayals as a platform for cultural meanings that perpetuate gender stereotypes, transforming their mimetic role for the culture. It explores how viewers who analyze women's emotional, individual, and professional choices perceive cultural clues.

Trait theory states that people naturally handle various circumstances and interact with their environment based on their personalities. Personal qualities may help determine how to connect and what task they are suited for. Qualities like self-exploration, rebelliousness, and teamwork may also indicate other aspects of a person's life. An OTT viewer now participates in meaning formation through webisodes, breaking the writer-director-actor triad. In this process, metanarratives pitch in. Cultural and contextual viewpoints are needed in metanarratives. This study examines visual and symbolic portrayals using a semiotic framework to reveal the semiotic signals, codes, and signifiers that shape neo-femininity. The study will analyze online series as metanarratives in its subsequent sections where audience research seeks to examine modern *streaming* culture.

2. Literature Review

In metanarratives, stories are the inquirer's collection and retelling. They can assume the shape of individualistic tales, providing complete illustration of all existence and occurrences (Erickson). The metanarrative exercises a critical role in meaning production since it interacts with internal meanings and cultural norms, which operate as encoded standards (Irving and Klenke):

Metanarrative is a qualitative method of inquiry which incorporates historical, psychological, and cultural perspectives and offers a highly developed body of self-knowledge depicting the narrator's self-interpretation that reflects the ontological integrity of meaningful experiences in the individual's life. (page 6)

Positioning of women's femininity can be measured through such meaningful productions, and there is a void in the literature about traits doing so. A query that focuses on the role metanarratives (or lived experience) play in producing meaning through traits is therefore proposed to bridge the gap. This attempt adds various extra components to narrative interpretation through qualitative research approaches, such as context integration and purposeful meaning-making of lived experiences through a set of propositions, representations, and scope for further exploration.

a) The 'Big Five' Personality Traits

Despite various famous models of personality traits having an impact on meta-analyses and contemporary studies (Jung) today, the Big Five Model is one of the most widely utilized well-known models (Rossberger). After adding a fifth trait, neuroticism, or emotional stability, to Cattell's (1943) 35 bipolar language clusters pertaining to qualities and standard Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the following is a summary of the Big Five features (Rossberger):

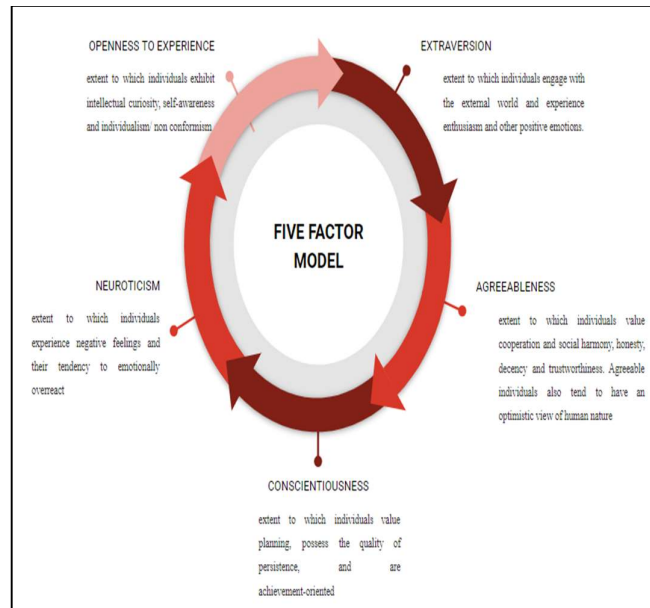


Figure 1- The Big Five personality traits

The Big Five personality traits are designed on the basis that subsumes virtually all attribute descriptors and is consistent over cultures. There are a number of 'mini markers for every character trait, such as 'talkative' for Extraversion and 'sympathetic' for Agreeableness which would better represent a holistic set of characteristics.

b) Indian Neo-femininity

OTT women-oriented content strive to shatter gender stereotypes by showing a positive demand drive and a noticeable triumph. The platform has pushed more women-centric material than mainstream film in recent years (Alice). The characters have had critical and commercial success. Watching leading women in 9 yards of decency plotting against their in-laws is rare today. Modern female actors are powerful, outspoken, and driven to breach the glass barrier. Vartika from "Delhi Crime", Shikha from "Test Case", Tara from "Made in Heaven", Monica from "Code M" and the female gang from "Four More Shots Please" ruled OTT with powerful performances. Actor Swara Bhaskar believes more of this sort of material should be made so that female protagonists become the norm, and "women-centric" entertainment is no longer called that (Maniamkot). A closer look at the content shows how women roles make one sit up and notice their unapologetic voices declaring that women are not catalysts or Mannie-pixie-dream-girls but driven characters with real-world tasks. Web series are not one-stop-all answers since all representations are politically laden with power conflicts. These ecosystems enable us to find subcultural resistance, countercultural forms, and subversive possibilities in female characters asking for systematized interpretation or analysis.

Cultural materialists also challenge the exploited and marginalized, highlighting the necessity to combine literary and visual techniques. They emphasize the necessity for dissident interpretations that challenge power relations, therefore viewer-critics must analyze representations. The very existence of this dialogue highlights gender representation difficulties. The Indian settings of OTT platforms emphasize both visual cultures, as well as the creative fraternity's fame and responsibility. Despite the goal of providing an integrated understanding of an individual, personality traits are considered essential, while individual choices, identity traits, and professional markers that create the corpus are deemed secondary.

Characteristics are people's assessments of themselves based on consistent behavioral tendencies (McCRAE et al.) To better understand online entertainment culture, conceptual concerns about proposed models of personality elements defining the new Indian woman are analyzed to study these linkages. First, descriptions of diverse opinions on attribute-new woman interactions are described. Second, a logical framework for determining which features are most associated with neo-femininity is offered by rooting the analysis on the Big Five model and its expansions to Schwartz's Value Theory, one of the most explored trait models. The Big Five Paradigm, the world's most researched

characteristic nomenclature (Allik and McCrae;Costa), categorizes many traits into five trait orientations and sub-blocks. The study will additionally associate each variable and its characteristics shown in Figure 1 elucidating the degree and direction of relationship between the neo-feminine traits with age and gender.

Propositions-

1. The new women on OTT show traits of assertiveness, opinionatedness, unconventionality. They are unapologetic and are characterized by their nonconformity to societal expectations and the rebellious streak in them.
2. Neo-femininities are associated with agreeableness and women in the contemporary screen are portrayed to be real, self-loving, exploring and discovering yet balanced individuals on screen.
3. Women characters, today, reflect conscientiousness in the online streaming mediums by being ambitious, financially independent, good decision makers, team builders or leaders and street smart.
4. New women depict emotional stability on various OTT platforms by being an admixture of emotional strength, work life balance and a blend of liberal ideas and typical Indianness or the lack of any.
5. Femininity, nowadays, is more open to experience in web spaces as it is featured by flexibility and the daring to dream approach towards newness.

3.Methodology

Through a qualitative analysis of the web series in question, society's unconscious placement of biases and longing for independence is revealed. Diagnostic research, metanarrative, and semiotic methods assist in understanding the visual media as an intertextual discipline. Amazon Prime's "Made in Heaven," "Four More Shots Please," Netflix's "Delhi Crime," "Bhaag Beanie Bhaag," and Disney Hotstar's "Aarya" all share the ironical paradox of patriarchy in Virginia Woolf's "A Room of One's Own" (Woolf) while crossing boundaries to find themselves as women's subordination, freedom, and rise are crucial to both academics and online millennials.

a) Possible Moderators and Inclusion:

Five moderating traits aligned with the Big Five Factor Model are considered to alter the strength of correlations between qualities and new women. The keywords "personality," "traits," and "new woman" were used to search Scopus and EBSCO for relevant papers. We also searched the reference sections of the papers found in the original search for extensive research. Narratological research included delivery strategies, topic selections, etc. Structuralist metanarratives reportedly delve beyond what is offered to find the meaning's sources and context. To address the signs and symbols of the content and remove the terms from their surface meanings, the analysis is limited to the dominant taxonomies for categorizing traits, the Five Factor Model, and to individual research on characteristics and values.

In this regard, two recent Netflix episodes, "Delhi Crime" and "Bhaag Beanie Bhaag," might be used to diagnose and analyze glocal femininity. The two series were selected on the basis of respondents' choices on relatable women characters on OTT media. The 7-episode 2019 series "Delhi Crime" follows the police investigation of the December 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape case in Delhi. This narrowly controlled 'crime thriller' drama series has 8.5 IMDb ratings and is not a police-arrest-of-criminals story. "Bhaag Beanie Bhaag" is a 6-episode, 2020 film with 4.5 IMDb average ratings about Beanie, a young girl who leaves her comfortable home to pursue a standup comedy career and succeed despite worried parents and a marriage proposal-bursting boyfriend. With its contrasting stories and reception, it seeks to show how creating 'new' feminine screen spaces and presenting role models via OTT platforms are preconditions to sustained growth of their portrayal. The study would highlight 'run-on-the-mill' and 'avant-garde' discourses respectively for the series in question. Conventional narratives legitimize the victim/rescuer dichotomy, whereas non-conventional narratives show a self-exploring woman trying to find her identity.

b)Methods:

The pilot research used three respondents from a unique sample pool. The pilot research's hypothesis, data collection, and analysis successes and failures shaped the present study. While trait theories are not ethnographic inquiry, the pilot demonstrated the viability of qualitative personal interviews to generate detailed perspectives and is used in this study for decoding audience's perception and thereafter co-constructing daily viewers' subjective experiences in understanding Indian women's representation on OTT media.

To acquire primary data on Netflix consumers' and interpreters' experiences, in-depth interviews are used (Livingstone). Personal interviews are acceptable because they place respondents in cultural and socioeconomic

contexts (Holstein and Gubrium; Warren, C. (2002) *Qualitative Interviewing.Pdf*). The literature study shows a lack of research on neo femininity in the context of Indian OTT media. Structured surveys confine respondents to researchers' presumptions in question development (Holstein and Gubrium), which may reflect respondent experiences or bias (Barker). Interviews chosen over focus groups and other methods are becoming impossible due to the commercialization of new media consumption (Livingstone) and pandemic restrictions, which make it difficult to moderate objective, dominant voices, and consensus.

The sample technique employed Robinson's 'inclusion criteria' (Robinson) to include Indian, young people who like Internet TV and technology-based media (Bhattacharya). Only viewers who watched and mentioned "Delhi Crime" and "Bhaag Beanie Bhaag" and connected with Netflix at least once a month were chosen for interviewing across Uttar Pradesh, Kolkata, Delhi and Bangalore. Sample homogeneity was preserved for Indian ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic category, whereas gender and profession were heterogeneous. Along with inclusion criteria, purposive sampling was used.

Semi-structured interviews enable open, fluid, and thorough narratives without the rigidity of structured personal interviews while preserving the study objective (Brinkmann). After the initial interview, censorship and binge-watching opinions were elicited through the questions. To receive responses on notable female characters on television, more open-ended questions were incorporated and worded in a logical progression or relationship. The first segment examined how respondents integrate OTT platforms into their daily routines- platform, genre preferences and which factors facilitate their viewership. The next section discusses respondents' favorite TV series, personalities and why. The third or final set of questions asks about women's depictions in web series and the attributes they identify or relate with to elicit their engagement with Netflix's favorite series.

After obtaining consent, 34 (17 females, 17 men) personal interviews were audio-recorded for 25 minutes using a mobile phone and camcorder. To maintain dialogue continuity and detect nonverbal clues, notes were avoided. The fundamental and recurrent qualities were categorized to identify themes for further investigation or summarization. The reciprocity allowed the researcher to share her own experiences to help respondents feel comfortable discussing personal viewpoints. Binary questioning was avoided to collect rich discursive material, and the researcher used open-ended questions to follow up.

3. Discussion

a) Busting the Gender Dichotomy of the Mythical Damsel and Knight in *Delhi Crime*

According to Sartre's "outcomes of our decisions" (Sartre), productive women like Damini Roy in "Four More Shots Please" (Amazon Prime) and "Aarya" (Disney+Hotstar) are driven by conscious decisiveness. To assess the conventionality and unconventionality of feminine experiences, a similar exploratory elaboration must be used to "Delhi Crime." A crime thriller written and directed by Riche Mehta; "Delhi Crime" won the 48th International Emmy Award for Indian drama web series in 2020 for its skillful examination of gruesome crime tragedies. Based on the 2012 Delhi gangrape, the seven-episode series explores Delhi Police's investigation of the horrifying incident, not just another instance of systematic violence that shocked the country. The first episode, narrated by no-nonsense police officer DCP Vartika Chaturvedi (Shefali Shah), takes viewers to a terrible murder scene in winter 2012 using symbolic power clothing. The battered victims, Deepika, gang-raped in a moving bus, and her injured friend Akash, found at the roadside, were starkly denuded, highlighting the issue of women's security in the national capital. The DCP, always seen in her sartorial best, either with femininity coded in her police uniform or casual winter wear in the domestic sphere, assembled a team of her most trusted officers to find the perpetrators. In a frightening pilot episode, we meet the South Delhi Police squad, led by the experienced DCP Vartika Chaturvedi and one lady, Rasika Dugal, on the verge of one of India's darkest crimes. Throughout the season, the efficient task force works to identify the bus, interrogate the bus driver, and find his five accomplices while Vartika battles public outrage, team grudges, red tape, her daughter's fears, her own guilt, politicians and media. "Delhi Crime" realistically depicts the struggles of a woman trying to do justice with her amazing professional and leadership skills, breaking the mythical binaries of phallogocentric discourses where an ordinary damsel in distress is rescued by an undebatable male knight, thereby reviving Butler's gender performativity and passivity via repeated performances or roles rather than societal norms and obligations (Butler).

Reflecting on the personal identity of a recent Netflix film, "Tribhanga" (2021), directed by Renuka Sahane, a tri-lingual film that stars three unorthodox generations and their outspokenness to captivate viewers, the idea that "women can have it all," while often achieved is heavily questioned. The definition of "all" in "Tribhanga" where women have the freedom to choose, but their decisions are not without repercussions—repercussions from patriarchal societal structures, depicts a crazed dance of unbalance that the three characters must go through because

of the male's presence, mis-presence, or disappearance. Stars, Mithila and Kajol discuss putting up the *ghunghat* (veil), gender determination, orthodox household activities, the mother's decision to be a single mother, and the grandmother's (Tanvi Azmi) ambition to write, risking losing an ideal mate and a father to her daughter. The sequence and decoding of events illuminated revolutionary choices and showed living with and without these repressed urges. On the other hand, the semiotic accent on the competent, confident, capable DCP Vartika dilutes and denies the traditional representation of women's carnal and mental limitations as weak, chaste and reconstructs it as a "new" masculinity that attacks voyeurism and massive sexual violence. She chastises some laid-back officers (males) to strengthen the task force and prevent them from mentally harassing imprisoned convicts (males) in two episodes, reminding us that feminism is about equal rights and not superiority. The series also portrays her as an insecure mother who doesn't allow her daughter to pursue academic pursuits due to the horrible circumstances outside that resonated with parents/guardians of every family at the time. Due to this question of whether creativity is solely a male prerogative, female writers/creators have portrayed Martha Rochester, the insane woman in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, as the author's double, a representation of her own anguish and wrath at the barbaric act (GILBERT and GUBAR). The Auteur Theory supports this by stating that the director's, here, a woman's vision is reflected in the work. The short story set the stage for a new story that emphasizes Vartika's teamwork and ignores the male characters' passionate gazes. The first web broadcast conversation regarding the victim's bare body is eliminated and invalidated. *Delhi Crime* uses gender performativity to create a more egalitarian society and protest evils against women to trigger a narrative pendulum that oscillates between the victim signifier and the rescuer-signified, the narratology's actants.

b) Bhaag Beanie Bhaag—Stream or skip the free woman?

Mira Nair's 2020 BBC adaptation of Vikram Seth's elaborate saga, "A Suitable Boy," satisfies one's eager wait for Indian matchmaking episodes but fails to elegantly depict Indian mothers' single-minded determination to get their daughters married. Rupa Mehra attempted to locate her daughter, Lata 'a suitable boy' eroticizing marriage as an important institution, and reproductivity baggage. Such eroticization of nuptial connections leads Beanie Bhatnagar to a utopian existence with an MBA, a sought-after career and a not-so-hip loving fiancé who promises everlasting financial security through a four-bedroom flat with a dishwasher in "Bhaag Beanie Bhaag". Netflix premiered a 6-episode web series in 2020 directed by Debbie Rao, Ishaan Nair, Abi Varghese. The humorous socio-cultural climate of introspection and self-discovery is central to the web series, which stars Swara Bhaskar as the great 29-year-old Beanie, who makes it a fun watch despite its flaws and its focus on female liberation as a life goal. Beanie breaks out from marriage-validating domesticity and takes to the stage, leaving her engagement ceremony naturalizing domesticity for women throughout the series. Like Midge Maisel of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," she resigns her latent desire at trying times, saying, "*Jab family samose wale ho toh salasa ke sapne nahin dekhne chahiye.*" (One shouldn't dream of salsa in a confectionary family). After the huge engagement ring is popped, she realizes she should take care of herself rather than her family's whims. She and her friend, Kapi (Dolly Singh) immediately attend a comedy club to try Beanie's luck as a standup comic, but there are no openings, so she tells American performer Ravi (Ravi Patel) a sob tale and gets a position. Her stage performances create magic, and she keeps coming into Ravi, panics and leaves her job to pursue standup comedy full-time, only to realize that her drive to hear her own voice fits into the random design of life. Her journey from a bumbling dream girl to happy-go-lucky one who mysteriously has-it-all via coincidences and conveniences leads her to her friend's wedding, where Ravi encourages her to use her creative talent. Taking advantage, Beanie improves as a stand-up comic overnight.

According to (Nijhawan), "Ignoring the reality that she is playing for guys, the emphasis is on the lady rather than the man" in item songs. Beanie defied gendered audiences with remarkable finesse, triumphing over traditional Indian rom coms about marriage and inspiring a new conception of femininity as self-sufficient. The flexibility of gendered social borders in standup comedy and art (called a Freudian slip) symbolizes a free, liberal society where double colonization is demolished, denying imperialist and patriarchal impacts on women. She power-dresses from the start with an improper wedding dress to her career best in a deep neck midi with tapered ends. Power dressing reassures her departure from diffident domesticity, relegates the camera's permeation of female bodies to her confident actualization of dreams through self-erotization of Beanie, a universal challenge to the silent masculine gaze (Colleges and Bong). As a coming-of-age series, her formal and casual dress as an Indian lady whose physical appearance is controlled by Indian-ness reflects her struggle to please her parents while following her passion. The "Bhaag Beanie Bhaag" quest for self-discovery and achievement is a festival that distinguishes it from "Delhi Crime".

4. Findings and Results

The findings contain an in-depth examination of the study's primary results. The findings support the theoretical hypotheses established in the literature review section, as well as investigating how Netflix has been absorbed into

the cultural fabric through its vast array of digital storytelling. The key indications or tropes found by the study and agreed upon by respondents (Braun and Clarke) generally encompass emotional, identity and professional characteristic clans. These clans were revealed to be symbiotic and comprised qualities defining a definitive new lady represented on OTT in modern times.

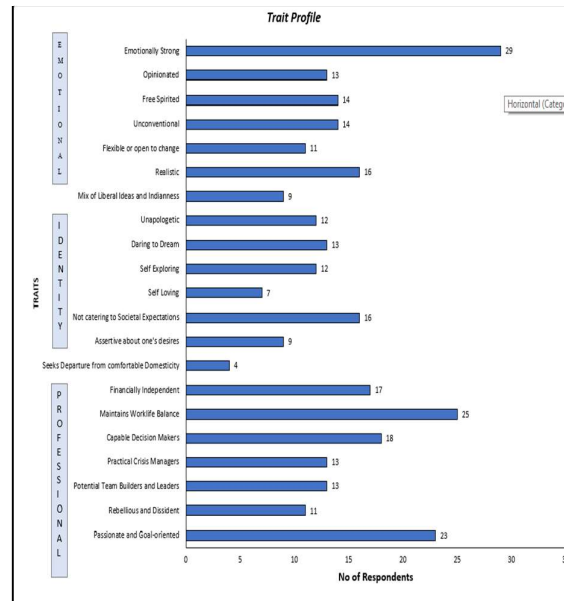


Figure 2- Trait Profile of new women on OTT

Most participants stated how women's portrayals and actions greatly affect the flow of tales by deviating from the inherent concept of good against evil or its victory in traditional entertainment media. Since audience research considers the inclusion of specialized audiences, which are associated with urban, almost educated young people in India, linkages are drawn in terms of millennialism (age) and gender (as to which gender amongst millennials club and identify women with which of the traits). Consequently, the findings of hypothesis testing are provided to investigate the degree and direction of relationship between the qualities, age and gender.

a) Trait Associations

When we discuss the linkages between trait classifications and neo femininity, we refer to the amplitude of detected connections, as well as the trends of linkage. Extraversion- It locates, in new women, traits like assertiveness, opinionatedness, unconventionality, unapologetic behavior, that of not catering to societal expectations, and rebelliousness. Extraversion, as predicted, is associated with more peaks and less valleys. Moreover, relationships are theoretically relevant and often follow a sinusoidal pattern. Consumers actively involved with the Netflix series were found to be between the age group of 26-30. Individuals with high extraversion are non-catering to societal expectations as the most prominent trait characterizing neo femininity followed by rebelliousness, unconventionality, assertiveness,

Figure 3- Extraversion Traits

opinionatedness and unapologetic approach. However, there is a declining trend observed in the age groups of 31-35, 36-40 and above 40 as

well as a moderate engagement for below 18 and the age range of 18-25. Almost equal number of males and females (15 males, 17 females) in the age group of 26-30 believe that extraversion traits are featured in such Netflix shows.

2. Agreeableness- The extent of loving oneself, exploring oneself, maintaining work life balance and being realistic are traits associated with agreeableness. Individuals with high levels of agreeableness prioritize being prosocial, particularly toward individuals in their immediate circle along with celebrating or discovering oneself. This may also imply limiting oneself in belonging to traditional conformity and getting along with others in this respect. Individuals with low levels of agreeableness, on the other hand, prioritize being dominating. Agreeableness, like

extraversion, shows less of a sinusoidal pattern and instead is characterized by more peaks with almost negligible valleys. The viewers (11 males, 16 females) who have mostly watched the discussed series are found to belong to the age group of 26-30 with the belief that new women should be as realistic as Vartika and Beanie primarily, maintain work life balance in the second place and then be self-exploring and self-loving to qualify themselves as women of the contemporary society. The analysis found decreasing viewership and identification of such traits in other age groups like 31-35, 36-40 and above 40 while there is a possibility of an increase in age groups of 18-25 and below 18. Signs of agreeableness are found to be depicted in the mentioned series according to males and females alike with minor variations and is agreed upon as a characteristic trait of neo femininity.

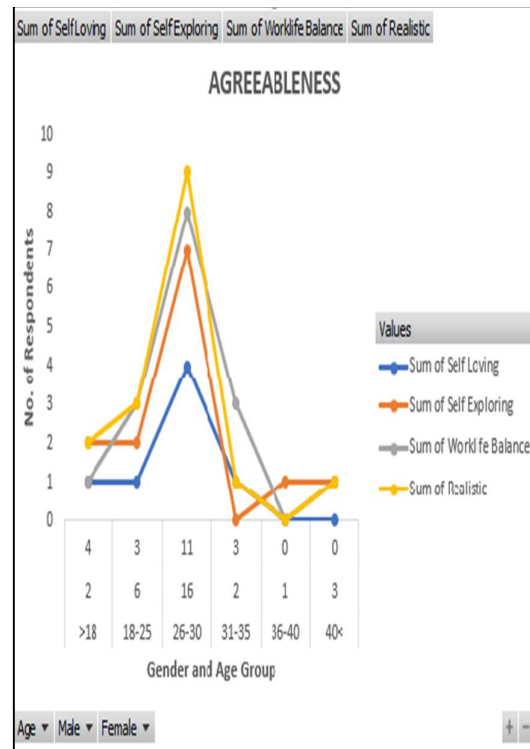


Figure 4- Agreeableness Traits

3. Conscientiousness- Only conscientiousness was predicted to be a positive characteristic exhibiting peak of correlations with age and gender of respondents rather than a sinusoidal pattern of correlations. However, there is a consistent increase in viewing beginning at the age of 18. Its associations followed the predicted pattern; however, it was most strongly linked to ambition, team building, and leadership, financial independence, decision making and crisis management in the descending order among viewers (19 males, 18 females) of the age group of 26-30. There is steep decline witnessed in the age group of 31- 40 or above. Additionally, the welcome note is that males, on an average, surpass the females in believing conscientiousness as one of the features of a new woman.

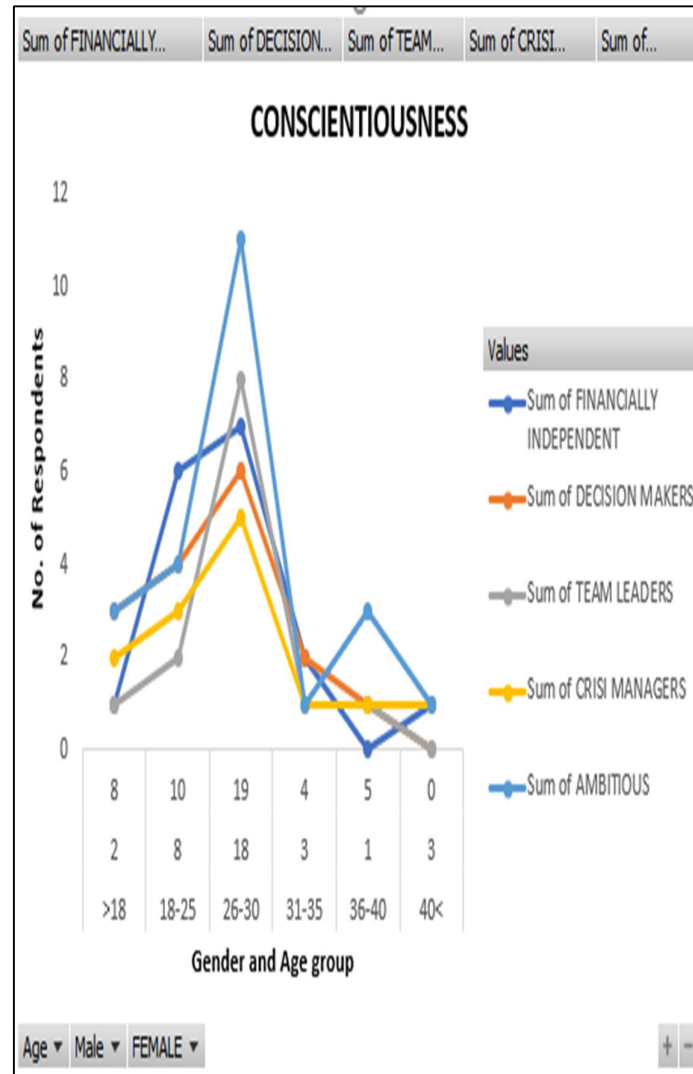


Figure 4- Conscientiousness Traits

4. Emotional balance- Emotional stability, as predicted, did link with the character traits on screen and was heavily valued as one of the prime desirable leads in the women portrayals on Netflix. This supports our hypothesis that emotional strength in the first place, a blend of liberal ideas and Indianness in the second and the closely following maintenance of work life balance comprising emotional stability is depicted on screen and should be cultivated to avoid the adverse effects of neuroticism and overreaction. Our analysis also supports the notion presented that the negativity of neuroticism results from burnouts and the absence of the above-mentioned traits. The negotiation of the audience with the series, “Delhi Crime” and “Bhaag Beanie Bhaag” remained high in females within the age group of 26-30 (5 males, 10 females) with steady, if not dramatic surges in the age groups of 18 or below 18-25. A dip is displayed in the 30 years old and those above with more males believing emotional stability is a requisite trait featuring neo femininity in the visual media.

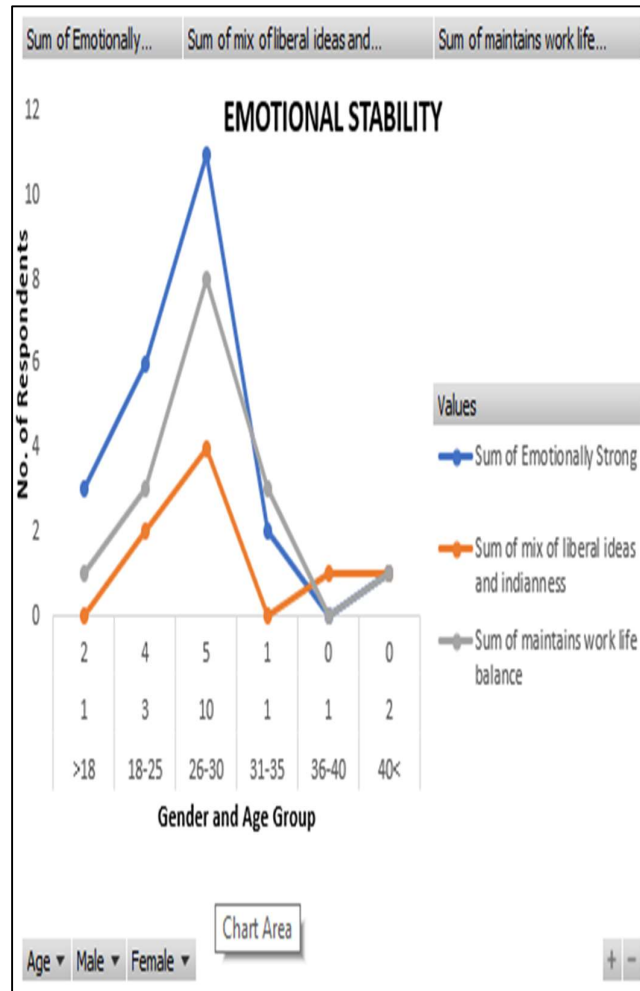


Figure 5- Emotional Stability Traits

5. Openness to new experiences- - Based on the most cognitively based attribute, openness or availability to experiences, and the overlap in content, this trait was predicted to have the maximum associations with contemporary women. Indeed, among the five qualities studied, openness to experience exhibited some of the highest relationships with the daring to dream characteristic in Vartika and Beanie. When it comes to the flexibility identified in both, it displays the clearest correlation pattern and almost sinusoidal correlation pattern. Individuals that are receptive to new experiences are considered to enjoy novelty, particularly imaginative ideas, and broadmindedness. Individuals who are closed to new experiences, on the other hand, place a premium on keeping the world intact and the comfort zone it provides (valuing legacy, compliance, and safety). Again, the popular age group of 26-30 (8 males, 7 females) were proven to be highly active participants of the series and ranked the daring trait above flexibility. Peaks are not dramatic in millennials, but a decline is found in the age group of 31-40 and above. To top it all, males outnumber females in believing openness to new experiences is an essential trait in the new women.

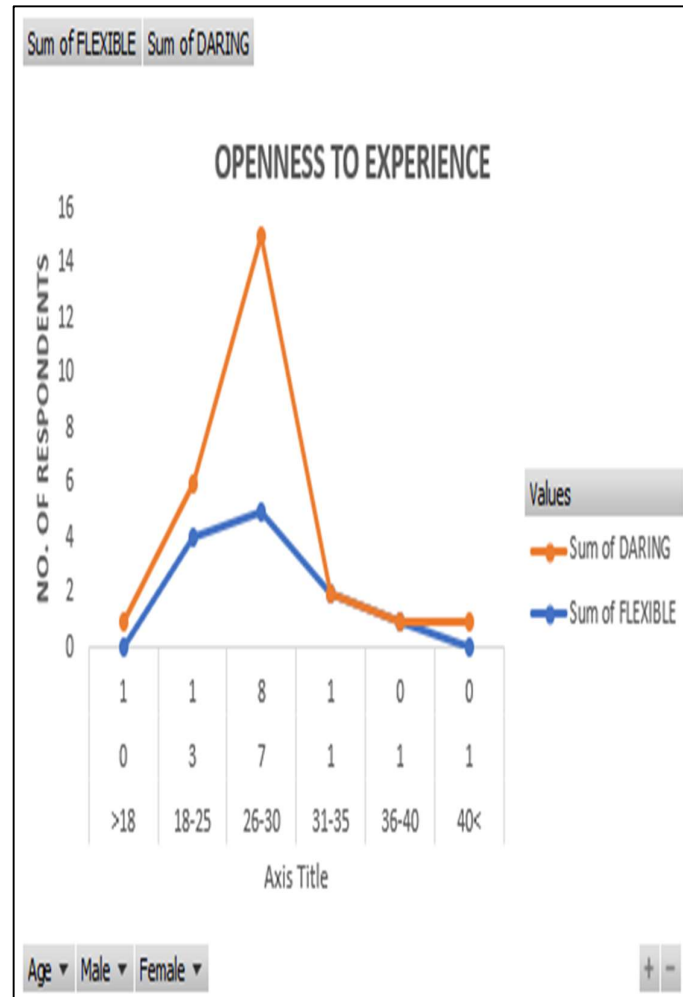


Figure 6- Openness to Experience Traits

The graphical outcomes of this investigation, as shown in Figures 2-6, verify the theoretical assumptions suggested by this study. The findings back previous research. Personal innovation was shown to be positively associated with the first three categories and openness to experience. These findings are similar with prior studies, which revealed that individuals with higher extraversion are better capable of executing inventive activities. (Eastman et al.);(Hsieh et al.). Individual innovative activities are influenced by agreeableness (Rossberger). Conscientiousness was detected for having a considerable favorable impact (Hsieh et al.). People with significantly neurotic personalities, may struggle to demonstrate inventive behaviors and explore innovative ideas (Eastman et al.; Hsieh et al.; Allik and McCrae; Terracciano and Costa). Finally, it was discovered that openness to experience predicts individual level creativity. (Rossberger; Hsieh et al.).

5. Conclusion

a) Netflix Series Unveiling New Womanly Attributes-

Netflix like OTT's alteration of Indian literature and internet accessibility helped to redefine Indian cinematic spaces. The respondents' preference for national shows on Netflix is regarded as impacted by their perceptions of conventional Indian programming, mostly seeming enticing due to exercising their content selection within the vast, unusual content library. Based on the analysis of both the web series on Netflix, it can be concluded that, despite portraying powerful, forceful positions and seeming strong and bold on screen, the woman's entity clings to be social-cultural signifiers-signifieds in the Netflix landscape notwithstanding re-configurations, amendments and negotiations that constitute neo-femininity. Through the study of narratives, three queries have been circumscribed

- the attributes of the neo-femininity concept in Netflix, the semiotic undercurrents that substructure them like dress codes of the new women, as well as the junction of opposing power discourses- vulnerability, emancipation-subservience, ownership-disownership. As far as relationships between traits and new women are concerned, traits like conscientiousness and emotional stability are favored as prior determinants of neo-femininity, followed by the next important openness to experience, and then extraversion and agreeableness closely follow suit by the most active engagers of the mentioned series.

"Delhi Crime" and "Bhaag Beanie Bhaag" strengthen a liberal reconstruction of femininity by showing subjective, impersonal crusades against norms, taboos, and conventions—what Willis would refer to as "counter cultural" representation (Willis). Our analysis of Delhi Crime reproduces the idea of double colonization and employs this through characterizations of women protagonists. It subverts and at the same time sustains the conventional construct of the woman's body as an erotic object submissive to the dominating male figure which when dressed assumes the specter of power, chastity, and knighthood or else denuded. The same explanations extend to the multifaceted women characters of Mumbai in "Bombay Begums" (2021) who are all privileged in a way or the other but surrender to the innate carnal and corporeal conflicts. In contrast, Beanie's discovery of her dreams, self-assertion of her latent potentiality as a woman and grooming serves as grim reminders of the trickle-down effect of androcentric layers of society- the pre-ordained notions of beauty and empowerment being antithetical to the rebel in her.

The double-edged capabilities of neo-femininity in the middle of androcentric gaze are well attempted to explain as two woman-centric series that have come a long way shattering fads and defying preconceptions, wind up becoming trapped repetitively in a ubiquitous victimizer web. In the "Delhi Crime", the female victim, Deepika, is mercilessly invaded by patriarchal characters, while Beanie is cross-cuttingly tied down by the original depressing males who tried and consigned her to the home arena. Such patriarchal webs must be untangled, and people like Vartika and Beanie must be examined using a nuanced and multi-dimensional approach, as described above. The research laid the basis of coexistence of liberal ideas of beauty, power, and restrictive criteria of an Indian lady that has arisen in Netflix's most notable storylines. Mere female domination in on-screen narratives flaunting their sexuality cannot be accepted as reliable indicators of neo-femininity alone but the interviews also hinted at responsible viewership and the in-depth analysis of neo-feminine character constructions in web series where roles, social standing, dress, framing, implicit and explicit spoken allusions, plot devices, and how the tale is threaded across these storylines emerge as signs of their gender.

It has been discovered that the prominent aspects are dependent on each other in a feedback circuit and comparable cultural groups (urban Indian 26–30-year-old), irrespective of gender, serve the dual purpose of promoting the platform and enabling Netflix's Indian programming of shows like Delhi Crime and Bhaag Beanie Bhaag. The age groups of 18 and above are also chasing the pace of quality content viewership of series offering offbeat themes and characters. The older generations, however, are reluctant to own it wholly or promote the new cultural practice of OTT viewing. These observations not only contribute to women's studies in general but also help stakeholders and content creators tailor their service to cater to specific gender and age groups among Indian consumers.

a) Limitations and Future Scope-

Keeping with the feasibility of the study, there remains room for further research. With additional research, especially studies of persons from collectivist societies, Culture moderator analyses are likely to yield clearer findings. When there are enough studies, a meta-analysis may be performed to overcome these constraints. Other mediating or moderating factors can be added to further explain the findings of this study.

Second, by focusing just on research that employed the Five Factor Model for defining new women, we were able to exclude numerous studies that might have been worth adding if a significant number of such studies were available like the Schwartz's value circle (Schwartz). This meta-analysis could demonstrate the links between personality characteristics (from the Five Factor Model, the most generally used characteristic model) and personal values (from the commonly used Schwartz Value Theory). Moreover, in the Five Factor Model, traits like maintaining work life balance overlap and coincide with certain trait clans' categorization as in this case it falls in the domain of both Agreeableness and Emotional Stability. Future studies can help avoid such overlaps.

The results of this analysis may be valuable to researchers in more successfully employing features and values in their research, opening the way for the construction of conceptual models that may strengthen the integrated knowledge: (a) combining more parts of the person into a single research to improve knowledge of the person's enduring features, (b) investigating the causative guidelines of various personality aspects to increase knowledge of new women onscreen; and (c) using studies from other fields, like as neurology, to further enlighten and deepen our understanding. More elements, on the other hand, as well as the simultaneous interactions of numerous aspects, could be incorporated. Probe can be conducted with respect to the unexplored LGBTQIA+ respondents too as in the current study they were hesitant to identify with the third gender. It can be proven that attributes and values are

different entities with little cross-cultural variance in their interactions. In addition to qualities, values, aims, wants, attitudes, dispositions, and temperaments may be incorporated. Some research has been done in this area, with most studies focusing on two categories of constructions at a certain point of time but extensive research is required, as well as incorporating new constructs (Calogero et al.);(Goodwin et al.).

Practical factors restrict the sample size, which might assist the analysis if expanded. As this study focuses on how viewers integrate content with no genre particularity, an interpretive examination of how consumers decode Netflix episodes is outside the scope of this study, but it provides a framework for future research. Furthermore, Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas encourage researchers to investigate the forms and consequences of pleasure acquired by people who are not socially placed similarly to the study group (Katz et al.). In this scenario, it's worth asking about older generations, who are assumed to be more resistive to technological improvements (Evans), or even television viewers who can't afford the equipment and membership required by Netflix.

Traits are frequently seen to be more intrinsic; so, one may argue that if one of them influenced other(s), it could also be considered the same. It may also be claimed that principles impact qualities; for example, when a person has become a parent, the compassion and safety dimensions may turn out to be of more significance. They should influence their behavior, resulting in minor variations in attributes over time. As a result, we encourage academics to investigate this topic in longitudinal studies. In the future, a study using a longitudinal research strategy may yield more authentic results.

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